



Kathleen Hanna

Life after Bikini Kill



People are always like, "That person's not punk" or "That band

used to be my band and then all these dumb jocks got into them."

I used to be one of those kids—I wasn't a jock or a cheerleader, but I know it because I lived it. It can be really painful to have to face how fucked up shit is and how scared people are.

Scared of what?

Scared of being alive. Scared of things that are amazing. Scared of things that aren't like television or aren't dead.

What do you think went wrong there? Do you ever wish that things could have played themselves out differently?

I don't wish anything was different. If anything was different, I wouldn't be where I am and I wouldn't have the friends I have. I wish certain people hadn't died, but other than that, I don't have any big regrets.

There are certain moments when you feel really alive. You're really in love with your friends; you're really in love with your friend's bands; and you're really in love with your own band. All these things are going on that are really great and really in the moment.

When that becomes just a sentence in someone else's essay, you can feel really dehumanized.

There's a total language deterioration breakdown.

How strange is not have coine to have used it

and then eight turn on Spice V it stretched ac Spice's breasts

What really is girl power? It's when Angela Davis was put in prison and people went there and sang to her outside the window. It's these different moments when women really did seriously challenge the structure of society. That's girl power! My problem comes when it's just about barrettes and T-shirts.

When I could have dressed back in '91, it's creepy to me. It's never anything has become radical in they just get The it. They'll have a girls that won't sa beyond "Girl Pow

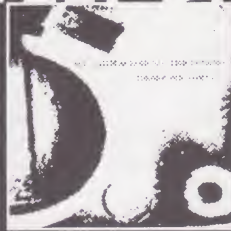


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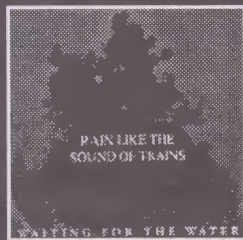
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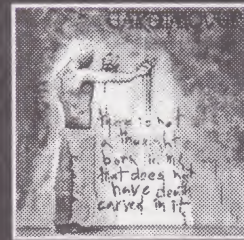
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the hard rhymer

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for PP28 November/December 1998

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the risks

The \$100,000 Question

I oftentimes find myself in the strange position of trying to explain to friends of mine that aren't into punk why I am. Conversely, I also find myself having to explain to other punks why I don't go to shows that often or why my record collection continues to slide down that slippery slope called "post-rock." Strangely enough, the answer I give to either question is a simple one: the ideas.

Punk to me—above music, above distribution networks, above fashion (especially above fashion) and above shows and zines and everything else—is about ideas. They are what I connect-ed with when I first got into punk, and they're still what keep me around today. I don't need to be going to shows every week because to me, I see punk when I read about GM auto workers fighting for their jobs or when I see the ten-year-old kids that live a block down from me build a ramp out of bricks and a piece of plywood and spend their summer days flying off into the sky on their rollerblades. Punk surrounds us—just look around.

I spent a day a few weeks ago at the Vans Warp Tour. If you don't know what the Warp Tour is, it's an all-day event with punk bands (and not-so-punk bands), skateboarders, and tons of booths to buy stuff. The promise of the Warp Tour was high—putting thousands of kids in one place always signals promise to me—however, it fell way short. Instead of ideas, there was merchandise. The overwhelming feeling I got from the Warp Tour was that if you wanted to rebel, you just had to buy certain products, wear the right clothes and listen to aggressive music.

As much as I'd like to think that punk offers a real alternative to that, oftentimes it doesn't. Sometimes it seems like the ideas behind punk that many of us hold dear get overshadowed by the products.

How many records do you own? How many shows do you go to? How many band shirts are in your dresser? How many zines clutter your floor? What alternative does punk really offer when it's so connected to capitalism? Is punk anything more than a consumer movement?

These are important questions to ask. They are also questions that pop up throughout this issue of *Punk Planet*. Sometimes they are asked directly, as they are in both the Kathleen Hanna and Behead the Prophet interviews. Other times, they lurk between the lines, like in Jon Strange's diary of his trip to Iraq. In his piece, we are faced with such inhuman pain and suffering brought upon the Iraqi people by our government that one can't help but reconsider how important finding that Necros 45 or Project X 7" really is.

There are 45 pages of ads in this issue of *Punk Planet*—without them, we wouldn't be able to print the magazine. I know that in many ways, *Punk Planet* plays right into what I'm writing about, but it's still important to talk about. Hopefully *Punk Planet* as a forum for information and dialogue rises above *Punk Planet* as a trumped-up trade magazine.

Keep the questions posed above in mind as you look over this issue and I'm sure you'll find them asked in ways I haven't even thought of yet throughout. Also keep them in mind when you're at a show or working on your own fanzine or whatever. One of the ideas that appealed to me most of all when I first got into punk was to question everything. It's time we start doing the same with punk itself.

Enjoy the issue and have a great fall,

DAN

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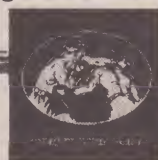
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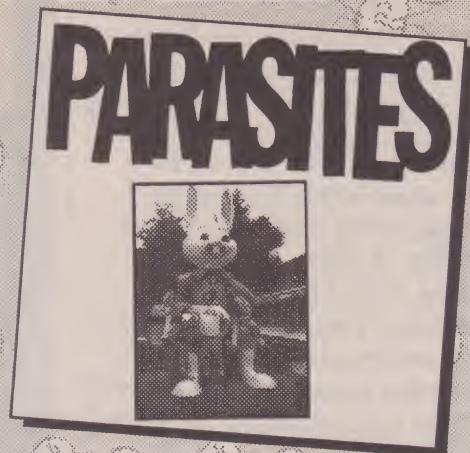
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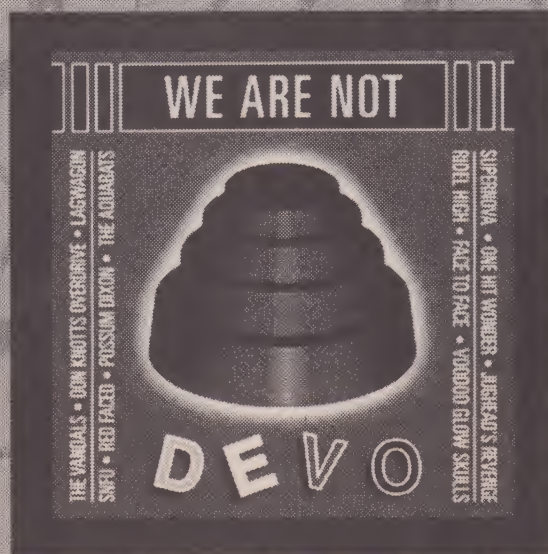
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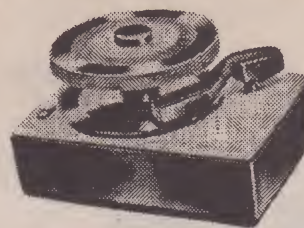
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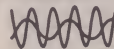
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Weasel defends Cometbus

To the readers of Punk Planet:

The latest installment of Larry Livermore's babblings just oozed through my fax machine. I long ago tired of Larry's denigrations of anyone who is part of the punk rock subculture whose artistic brilliance shines far brighter than his own dim, flickering lightbulb, but I feel the need to defend Aaron Cometbus' first novel because it's an insightful, beautiful, and outstanding piece of work that doesn't deserve to be trashed by a nasty old crank with a very personal agenda. Having read both *Double Duce* and Larry's ludicrous critique of it, it's obvious to me which one rings true and which one clanks with the dull and dissonant tone of complete horseshit. My anger at Larry and his moronic column aside, I feel confident that those of Larry's fans who read *Double Duce* will come to the same conclusion.

Double Duce is a great novel. And it is a novel, despite Larry's claims to the contrary. It's *not* simply a collection of short stories comprising just another issue of *Cometbus*. It's *not* just a string of stories about the wacky lives and times of the members of a punk house. Read it, then ask yourself why Larry refuses to call it a novel.

Double Duce tells the story of the inhabitants of a punk house located in a poor area of Berkeley who go through a collective crisis of identity and purpose with terrible consequences and it does so with honesty, clarity and, somehow, optimism. Is it a true story? I don't know and I don't care. It's the best piece of fiction to come out of the punk subculture; whether or not the story is factually accurate is completely beside the point. It's an extremely well-written and well-paced piece of work that shines a light on an important time in Aaron's life. Just as he does in *Cometbus*, Aaron uses himself as the relatively sane, objective narrator and like in *Cometbus*, he manages to bring a certain dignity to even the most fucked-up and damaged of his characters.

It's not a pretty story - Larry's at least right about that. But it's honest, and honest writing doesn't shy away from the truth, even when the truth is unpleasant. *Double Duce* is about

hope, dreams, apathy, guilt, fear, complacency, getting older, giving up and coming back and trying again; all the things that make *Cometbus* great. It's harrowing and funny; and it's sad and beautiful.

When I got my copy of *Double Duce*, I read it over breakfast every morning for a week and a half; I purposely read it slowly because I didn't want it to end. Having followed Aaron's writing for over ten years, I can say without hesitation that it's the best thing he's ever written. I've lent it to several friends who all agree that it's superb. I've heard from fanzine editors, owners of record labels, and members of bands who have all unanimously proclaimed it a great piece of work. The only real differences between *Double Duce* and Aaron's past writing are that he's gotten a lot better and he's learned how to sustain a novel-length story. I actually looked forward to reading it every morning, in part because I hoped everything would turn out okay for the characters. The reason I felt that way is because the novel's protagonist feels that way and his words do a good job of eliciting empathy.

Double Duce depicts the highs and lows of what it can mean to immerse yourself in the punk scene - and an unpopular subculture in general (in terms of Aaron's world of punk as compared to the one championed by readers of *Punk Planet* and people who buy hooded sweat-shirts emblazoned with the logos of their favorite bands) in a self-destructive way, and if the results are sometimes horrifying, well, that's life.

For years, *Cometbus* has been the fanzine that punks seem to relate to the most; a unique voice that stands head and shoulders above the crowd of lemmings, gladhanders and name droppers and exhibits an unabashed love for the punk rock scene. *Double Duce* sets a new standard for punk literature and it stands as a crucial piece of work in helping to make sense of some of the attitudes that make up our subculture. Fans of *Cometbus* are gonna love it.

But Larry's column, despite his disingenuous attempts to offer up proof that he really *likes* Aaron's work, is just the pitiful whining of an inherently miserable little man who can't stand the fact that a guy twenty years his junior has published his first novel while Larry still jets around the country (and London) with his millions, doing little more than writing an occasional column, exciting the hell out of the twelve Potatomen fans with his newest release and, mostly, jabbering away on the internet about

blacks and women in a manner that suggests that he really doesn't care very much for either.

Aaron doesn't need me to defend him; I'm sure he realizes how full of shit Larry is. But when the first major piece of criticism (and I find it difficult to even use that word in this case) of the first novel by one of our own is so blatantly dishonest and so obviously motivated by bitterness, then at least the novel itself deserves to be defended.

If Larry really liked and respected Aaron's work, as he claims, he wouldn't have gone to such lengths to tear *Double Duce* apart in so public a forum so soon after its publication. And if he just *had* to trash the novel, you'd think he could at least not do it in his infamously sleazy, backhanded way. If Larry simply disliked *Double Duce*, he simply could have said so. But as self-appointed cultural arbiter, he seems to feel that he has to be clever (read: nasty) about it, so he tells his readers what a great writer Aaron is before informing them that Aaron has changed, that his novel sucks and, in a backhanded way, that Aaron has become lazy and is coasting on past success. Folks, it's all bullshit, no matter how nicely that puling man-child might have wrapped it up and tied it with a bow.

Larry would have you believe that Aaron has changed for the worse, a claim he constantly makes of anyone he's known who he can no longer relate to. For some reason, Larry never seems to consider that maybe *he's* changed, and that maybe those changes have been cynical and ugly. Go back and read the sentence in the beginning of his column in which he states "I knew somebody would be repeating my words at some posh cocktail party before the week was out." Larry Livermore didn't make statements like that ten years ago, as smug and conceited as he was even back then. If it makes you feel better, tell yourself he was kidding. That's what he'll tell you anyway when somebody points out to him what an arrogant, deluded freak he's become. The problem here is not with Aaron, it's with Larry.

Larry insists that *Double Duce* isn't a novel because "Aaron... is making little (if any) of this up." Larry is a lot of things but he's not uneducated. Surely he must know that books like *Post Office* and *Tropic of Cancer* are as much novels as are *Moby Dick* and the latest Stephen King book. Surely he knows that the

term "novel" is a nebulous one and that pieces of work like *Double Duce* are commonly referred to as novels by both the publishing industry and readers. Surely he understands that most novels contain "true" stories and that nobody but a child who is still learning basic concepts deems a work "non-fiction" instead of a "novel" just because some or all of the events in the story actually occurred. *Double Duce* is a personal story framed in a barely-veiled fictional context; but it's still a goddamn novel, regardless of whether or not Larry can stand the thought.

Larry says that Aaron has "strange ideas about what is and isn't his business." He's referring to Aaron's character in *Double Duce*, who doesn't condone his roommates' gunplay but doesn't do anything to stop it: "... whose business is it, Aaron," he writes, "when people can't or won't control themselves, when they pose a danger not just to themselves, but to others?" Then he launches into another one of his long winded stories (you know, the ones that always sound completely fabricated) about a Berkeley crack house and throws in some angry white male rhetoric before insinuating that Aaron should have called the cops on his friends. It doesn't matter that their behavior was *self* destructive; Larry insists that shooting guns at Nintendo consoles and taking and/or dealing drugs is in some way harmful to others. He never points out how or why. He also forgets to condemn his own years of serious, big-money drug dealing, and we can only assume that his own gun ownership is justified because Larry the upstanding citizen would never stoop to taking out Donkey Kong with his 12 gauge shotgun. If, twenty years ago, Larry's friends had taken the self-righteous advice he now pumps out in his sagely manner, Larry would probably still be rotting in a jail cell somewhere. But as soon as Larry "straightened out," that's when his rules about boorish, destructive and illegal behavior took effect. (Apparently Larry's past actions aren't subject to the same scrutiny he gives to *Double Duce*; perhaps Larry's dope dealing and gun shooting is covered by some obscure grandfather clause.) Unbelievably, Larry states that "People can't be free to shoot guns or deal drugs or randomly destroy things without taking away other people's freedom in the process." Okay, then let's have Larry arrested for dealing drugs, shooting guns and helping

to destroy (at the very least) part of the old Ashtray punk house.

Larry's assertion that Aaron should have called the cops when his roommates started ruining the quiet peace of their beautiful neighborhood by winging innocent vacuum cleaners with shots from a pistol says a lot more about Larry than it does Aaron. Millionaires don't like their peace being disturbed. Which is not a condemnation of the concept of justice or the enforcement of sensible rules. It's just that in the novel, the only people who get hurt by the actions of the members of the Double Duce house are themselves (and even if other people *did* get hurt, what kind of person calls the cops on his friends?). Does Aaron glorify that self-destruction? Fuck no. And anybody who's ever read his stuff knows that it would be wildly against his character to do so. Aaron's character in *Double Duce* spends almost the entire novel talking, pleading, setting examples, doing anything he can to help his roommates off their self-destructive path. Eventually, the character *does* withdraw. He's done everything he can besides abandoning them (uh... or having them arrested). It's a sad story, but in the end, all the characters - as fucked up as they may be - keep on trying. Aaron seems to see them as beautiful losers; they can't even *give up* properly.

Ultimately, Larry just doesn't *like* the type of behavior described by Aaron anymore, and he particularly doesn't like that Aaron's character is ambivalent about it. Which says two things to me: One - Aaron's writing worked and two, Larry Livermore has gone from a radical, dope-dealing hippie/punk to a wealthy jet-setter whose solution to the ugly reality of desperate lives and other people's self-destructive behavior is to have them thrown in jail. One pictures the grey, frail Livermore shaking his fist at a group of kids who have knocked their baseball into his yard. He comes off as the kind of guy who will call the cops if the party next door goes past midnight. Those damn kids with their loud rock music and their video games!

By all means, call the cops. Those socially inept power freaks; those heavy-lidded mouth breathers recruited by local governments who know they need somebody dumb enough to take the job but smart enough to learn how to grow a moustache, don a pair of shades and whip around a billy club. They know damn well that the only boneheads who apply for

jobs with the police force are a bunch of frustrated jocks with a closetful of childhood issues, a liberal dose of repressed homosexuality and a serious need for ego-gratification, all of which manifest themselves in behavior that makes most of us who aren't millionaires scratch our heads trying to figure out who's really the bad guy. Cops are a necessary evil to be used for serious matters; not for a bunch of your idiot friends who are shooting teakettles and toasters inside your punk house.

Because Larry is convinced that *Double Duce* is a piece of non-fiction, he clumsily assumes that "real life" Aaron took the same attitude towards the events described in the novel as did *Double Duce* Aaron. Larry, as a writer, knows better; he knows damn well that writers like Aaron, Bukowski, Miller, and even hacks like Erma Bombeck and Larry Livermore assume a *character* in their writing and that those characters don't necessarily reflect reality. One wonders if Livermore would berate Mrs. Bombeck for "failing to ask the hard questions" or if he'd chide Charles Bukowski for not engaging in a "passionate pursuit of the truth" if given the chance to critique their work.

Larry, I'm sure, knows all this; he's just being disingenuous as usual. I'll give you ten to one odds that his real concern is that poor, innocent kids, of which Larry has always seen himself as a protector like some wrinkled, acid-damaged Holden Caulfield, will emulate the behavior of the characters in *Double Duce*. The theme of protecting the innocent - always incredibly misguided and condescending - is one that has affected many a major decision made by Larry since I've known him. I'd rather that art remain unaffected by a self-congratulatory concern for the welfare of impressionable youths. People like Larry Livermore and Bill Clinton want points for coming off as caring, responsible adults; as far as I can tell, they're really just crabby killjoys who react to that which they don't understand by trying to quash it. Having read Larry's nonsense several times, I'm inevitably drawn to the conclusion that his attack on Aaron's supposed irresponsibility is in reality the result of a combination of Larry's jealousy over the publication of a first novel by a younger, more vital member of the punk community than he and his own blind outrage over the events in the novel which Aaron has the temerity to describe without the use of a corny, dishonest disclaimer.

Larry quotes pieces from back issues of *Cometbus* and compares them with quotes from *Double Duce* (taken wildly out of context, naturally) in order to try to prove that Aaron contradicts himself, as if he doesn't understand that all good writers (and *people* - at least those who *grow*) do so. You can make minor contradictions look even worse if that's your agenda and if you have a basic understanding of how to cut and paste, as Larry proved in his column. I'd like very much to quote some of Larry's writings from when he was Aaron's age, but there aren't any. Larry was too busy shooting guns, dealing drugs and destroying things to bother publishing his writing.

Larry claims that Aaron eschews "the sort of introspection that might prove too discomfiting, and might interfere with the formula that has proved so successful for *Cometbus* over the years." It's a half-decent attempt to sound like a New York Times book critic, but it's a bullshit criticism. One wonders why Larry even bothers to pretend to like Aaron's work. At the very least, he doesn't seem to understand or even remember it. Any *Cometbus* fan knows that Aaron's writing is introspective; *Cometbus* is the quintessential "personal" fanzine.

Larry won't outright call Aaron a liar, but instead claims that "...too often he fails to ask, let alone answer, the really hard questions," and that *Double Duce* lacks a "passionate pursuit of the truth." What a couple of outrageously hypocritical statements. Larry Livermore even *discussing* the concept of truth is sort of like Richard Nixon teaching an ethics class. But beyond that, it's yet another attack on Aaron that's completely off base. Aaron *relentlessly* pursues the truth in *Double Duce* and discovers that it can be very ugly; maybe Larry just doesn't *like* that truth. Most of Aaron's writing is geared towards a better understanding of his own place in the world; he pursues the truth aggressively and honestly. But fact-telling? No, that's not *Cometbus*. Never has been. No good writing is. I learned that from Larry Livermore, who told me years ago that no good writer, even a non-fiction writer, tells the factual truth. The good writer characterizes a situation in an honest, readable and entertaining way in order to reach an ultimate truth. It's fucking Creative Writing 101 for crying out loud.

And if Larry is so concerned about truth-telling, maybe he oughta start practicing what he preaches. To begin with, he might see fit to

inform his dear readers that at least part of his problem with *Double Duce* is that he knew and was friends with many of the people who showed up as characters in the novel and that he was aware of - and *disapproved of* - the events that took place at the Double Duce house. And I'm supposed to believe that *Aaron's* writing is irresponsible? One of the people Aaron writes about is dead now. I'm sure that Larry is upset about it; maybe he even blames the events described in the novel. He could at least be honest about his heavy bias. No, instead he publicly lectures Aaron on pursuing "the truth." What an utter fraud. At which London S&M shop did Larry purchase that set of steel cajones he's swinging around?

Larry is simply offering up lame, half-baked attempts to critique the novel in order to suggest that Aaron has become cynical and that he's lost the desire to challenge himself; that suggestion is complete crap and I'm quite sure that Larry knows it.

In the middle of *Double Duce*, Aaron writes a paragraph - tongue in cheek in style but deadly serious in intent - describing his comments to his roommates whom he's gathered for a meeting:

"What other culture is so critical of itself?" I asked. "What other culture strives to build up traditions and costumes only to shun them? Would a Shiite Muslim hasten to deny the existence of Allah? Would a Chinese herbalist shiver at being called such a name? And yet, we are punks and we jump through hoops to deny the very culture from which our daily life revolves. We use the words as an insult. We are so quick to give away and avoid the things which we should protect and uplift, glorify and extoll. Now is the time to take them back!"

Hardly the words of a guy who is "disillusioned." Maybe Larry doesn't like those words because they hit so close to home. I wonder if Larry's readers can even begin to appreciate the irony of a man who condemns the very subculture that has afforded him the luxury of not having to work all day so that he can instead spend his time explaining to the members of said subculture why it's sick, if not dead. Back in rehab, we used to call that the "I got mine, so fuck you" mentality. Larry forgot where he came from so quickly that I feel a public request for the *Punk Planet* staffers to have the poor old geezer tested for Alzheimers is in order.

Larry insists that "I want Aaron to go all

the way." What he obviously really wants is for Aaron to just *go away*, precisely because he is going all the way with *Double Duce*. Cometbus has gone from a little kid fanzine - begun back when Disco Larry was still sharing plates of coke with other drug dealers - to the single most inspirational fanzine of my generation to a vehicle for its publisher's first novel. It couldn't have been easy for Aaron to have gone through all the transitions he has over the years, but he persists; he keeps raising the bar and demanding of the rest of us that we do the same; and he refuses to give up on the subculture that changed his life. He constantly tries to take both his writing and his subject matter to new levels; and *Double Duce* is a new high for him.

Again, I'm quite sure that in his heart Larry knows this. He just can't stand to see anyone else getting attention; it's that simple. A hell of a lot more people care about the art of Aaron Cometbus than they do about the art of Larry Livermore and it drives him bananas. The man has the temperament of a rattlesnake and the class of a pimp, and he shows both in his penny-ante attack on *Double Duce*.

Larry can use terms like "yobbo" and "pop star" until the cows come home but he's still - by choice - hanging on to the fringes of the American punk scene like a crippled dog begging for scraps. He can pronounce punk dead over and over until he actually starts believing it, but the bottom line is that the punk scene has passed Larry by - by fucking miles - and no matter how hard he tries to tell his tiny army of sycophants that *he's* the one who's passed punk by, it's obvious to anyone who knows him that he has completely lost touch with the subculture that he still desperately wants to be a major player in.

His tired method of attacking those who set forth a view that contradicts his own has now manifested itself in a wrong-headed, dishonest and nasty little piece that carves up the first novel of a writer who is far more important than Larry has ever been or ever will be. The novel obviously angers him, and after you read it you might take a minute to ask yourself why. To me, it's become increasingly obvious through his writings that Larry has succumbed to the greed and paranoia of many other extremely wealthy white men; he seems to resent and fear women, blacks and poor people as much as he resents and fears a subculture that, to his horror,

continues to exist - even thrive - without his oh-so-crucial input. And Aaron Cometbus is at the forefront of that subculture.

So his latest victim is Aaron. Well, since Larry likes criticism so much, here's some for him: His piece on *Double Duce* is at best a condemnation of a subculture he fears and hates and at worst, an obvious attempt to make himself feel better for being a complete failure as an artist. He sees *himself* as the primary commentator on the punk scene and he resents the fact that Aaron and many others *share* that role. Aaron simply takes the heat because he had the audacity to publish a novel while Larry was busy mouthing off on the internet.

Even though *Cometbus* is widely considered to be the best fanzine in our subculture (for instance, it was consistently voted in the number one spot in polls of other editors and record labels in the "Zine Guide" published by *Tail Spins* last year), it still doesn't sell anywhere near the number of copies as will a record by yet another idiotic, boring band from California. *No* fanzine does. You better *believe* it pisses me off, and while genuine criticism of punk writing is crucial for maintaining a reasonable level of quality in the things we read, *disingenuous* criticism does nothing to help close the gap; in fact, Larry's piece has done nothing but prop up the withering ego of a man whose time and energy would be better spent writing his own goddamned book instead of spending another twenty years just talking about it.

Read *Double Duce*. In fact, *try* to read it from Larry's twisted perspective. You'll still be unable to find anything that glorifies violence, or any behavior that fucks up other people's lives. Why? Because, despite Larry's assertions to the contrary, Aaron Cometbus is a guy who actually gives a fuck about the subculture that changed his life and, unlike Larry, he still has a very active role in that subculture. Aaron doesn't glorify the self-destruction of people in the punk scene, he *reports* it. He also bemoans it. Only a drunken mongoloid could read *Double Duce* as a glorification of mindless violence and self-destruction. Or a jealous, middle-aged millionaire who will do anything he can to tear down anything good that comes out of the scene that he keeps telling us he's left behind. If punk is dead and if writers like Aaron Cometbus have turned into something unpalatable for him, why the fuck doesn't Larry stop

writing his column and posting his thesaurus-inspired nonsense to alt.punk on the internet?

Okay, Larry, you've left us behind. The punk subculture is a teeny, tiny, self-involved mess. We understand. Nobody's holding you hostage - you can leave any time now. Wait, he's still here? Sheesh! Maybe Larry's feet are stuck to the floor of the punk scene by his own gooey disbelief; perhaps he's still in shock from learning that nobody gives a fuck about him now that he can't get a record contract for their band.

In the past two years Larry has spent as much time giving me public backhanded compliments as he has attacking me and my motives and portraying me interchangeably as a cunning greedhead and a paranoid schizophrenic. I won't bother with the compliments for Larry. Surely, he has the ability to be genuinely compassionate and to use his knowledge and experience to make an important difference in the world. But he's shown for the past four years that he's not going to take that road. He very obviously cares only about engaging in meaningless contests to see who amongst he and his internet buddies can make the most flippant, smart-ass comments about those who they feel occupy a lower social class and possess a level of intellect that is far below their own; and about knocking those who dare, through their art, to remind him that at fifty-one years of age, Larry Livermore hasn't done much of anything besides exploit a subculture in order to become a millionaire and to hold court to a dwindling flock of wide-eyed kids on issues of racism and sexism from the Patrick Buchanan perspective.

I hope the readers of this magazine will take the time to actually read the first novel of one of the most important writers of our time and not dismiss it just because a mean-spirited old crank is jealous of it. Larry Livermore is a small-minded, petty thug; an upper-class snob; a disingenuous creep; and, when it comes right down to it, a very lonely and unhappy man. If *Punk Planet* wants to give him space to engage in intellectual masturbation despite his complete lack of understanding of pretty much anything he mouths off about, I'm not gonna complain. Hell, *60 Minutes* has Andy Rooney, why shouldn't *Punk Planet* have Larry?

But just remember this: *that's all he is*. Larry is a caricature; a living joke; a thick headed court jester who thinks the crowd is laughing with him; and when forced to look inside himself, he must see only a bitter, cynical coot who

spends his days lashing out at a world that's passed him by and that he no longer understands. If you find him entertaining, that's swell - personally, I think he's a riot. Just don't ever make the mistake of taking him seriously.

Sincerely,

Ben Weasel

Punk Planet Readers,

You don't need to be very adept at reading between the lines to see that Mr. Weasel's real beef is not with my review of Aaron's book, but with me personally. While his dyspeptic diatribe makes for colorful reading, Mr. Weasel might do himself more good if he were to take up some of these issues with his therapist.

Larry



Baffled by Baffler review

Dear Punk Planet:

I have not picked up your magazine in a while, but I recently picked it up because I noticed in issue #26 a review of Tom Frank's book, *Commodify Your Dissent*, reviewed by Annalee Newitz.

Her review was venomous screed. Not only was it libelous and without examples, but it also struck me absurd because of her fantasies about the personal lives of the people responsible for creating and maintaining *The Baffler*. As a close friend of some of the folks who work on that most urgently needed journal, I cannot but guffaw heartily at Newitz's assumption that the goal of the staff of *The Baffler* is to achieve some kind of *Swingers* style hipness. I can only say good things about the *Baffler* staff, and I believe in their agenda, the integrity of their research, and the sterling quality of each issue I have read.

The obnoxiously-termed "Baffler boys" (what about the womyn writers and editors who have contributed over the years?) are pretty square, I must maintain. I have never witnessed Greg Lane wearing a zoot suit Tom Frank jiggling to ragtime, or Diamonds Dave pinching snuff. No, if anything, they are decent people who get thrills out of perusing old phone books and reading deToqueville. Incidentally, *The*

Baffler offices are located in a neighborhood project which empowers local kids, provides community gardens, allows local artists to thrive, and gives poor suckers like me something to do during their days of unemployment.

What disturbs me about Newitz's review is her dismissal of genuine historical research as somehow associated with trends of hipness. This dangerous and accusatory style of review robs history of its dynamic processes, robs any amateur historian from the ability to use history as a tool to reflect upon the modern era. Newitz is too caught up in her punk rock world of pointing the sell out finger to recognize the genuine intellectual "salvos" that *The Baffler*, and only *The Baffler*, can provide. I am disgusted by her pop-cultural and superficial dismissal of genuine research and theory which exposes some of the dangers we face as a society.

And finally, Newitz complains the annoyingly omnipresent complaint, that *The Baffler*, offers no solutions. That argument holds no stead. Their kind of critique opens doors to solutions, and the solutions are many. *The Baffler* provides the platform for radical change, just like the old labor writers who provided the intellectual ammunition necessary for a movement, and just like Upton Sinclair provided the muckraking necessary for reform in meat industry, just like the abolitionists, the AIM movement, etc., etc.

Newitz concludes with an objection "to the propagation of despair in a world that already delivers so much of it to us on a daily basis." Huh? By this logic, critique should be silenced because it makes us feel bad about reality. Yes, *The Baffler* is frustrating exactly because it pins down some historically emerging trends, which, I contend, will lead us to gluttonous over-consumption and extinction as a species. And that is a pretty scary thing to confront every time you pick up *The Baffler* and wince. I also contend that few weapons are left, one of which is the sickly sweet dark cynicism that pours from the pages of *The Baffler* like so much Vermont molasses on your French Toast, Annalee. Those people who want to become hippies and run from the shirtbox we are sitting in, be my guest. But please don't slander my hardworking underpaid friends, and try to stick to the issues and provide examples. 'Til then, adieu.

Sincerely submitted,

David McMahon
editor of the muckraker



Not so baffled by Baffler review

PP—

Bra-fucking-Vo on Annalee Newitz's coverage of Thomas Frank's scribbles. I've heard far too many bloated praises and empty handshakes concerning Frank's work and my eyes relaxed as I read this ripe perspective. Thanks for the refreshing point of view.

Chuck P.

San Diego



One with god, one with punk

Dear Punk Planet,

I am writing this letter in regards to Mr. Chad Cronk's letter entitled, "*Punk Planet*: tool of Vishnu." [PP25] Although this letter is directed to Cronk, I would first like to thank *PP* for being a tool of communication from one reader to the next

Okay here goes. When I first got into the punk scene about six years ago, I was silly and naive enough to think that if I had a relationship with Jesus Christ, I would not be accepted as a punk. Or maybe I was so weak that I let the ideas expressed through the music I was listening to influence me. As I started to figure out what punk was, I realized how dumb that idea was. The idea of punk stands for many things to different people everywhere. Within our community as a whole however, I think that it would be safe to say that as "punks" we exercise the rights that we have left. One being our freedom of religion and our freedom of speech. If *PP* prints an article that yer not into, don't read it. You don't even have to buy it if you hate it that much. You have yer own zine to express yer own thoughts and ideas. You exercise yer rights to say how you feel, why does it upset you or scare you that someone with an opposing view is exercising their rights?

Two years ago I read somewhere that the more hatred and rejection you express towards something, is an obvious display of

just how threatened you are by it. I'd like to ask you a question: You made reference in yer letter about the individual who felt that his life had been saved because of his religion, how is this bad? Another question: How does this affect you? And just one more: If kids in the straight edge scene do find happiness in their religion what does it matter to you, why does it bother you? The way I see it is "Whatever Floats Yer Boat" whatever gets you to wake up in the morning. So I'll turn the tables on you. Let's just say that dancing makes you happy, and there are this group of people who tell you that it's wrong. 'You can't be punk and tear up the dance floor like Puff Daddy. It doesn't mix, you aren't a true punk.' Even though you have all the ideas and politics that other genuine punks have inside of you. Can you see what is wrong with that? There is no one in this scene who has or should have the right to say what does and doesn't mix. Or the right to say what is right and what is wrong. Doesn't anyone realize that society and the media are already telling us what to do enough as it is? You are contaminating the purity of Punk. Lots of people that I know say that a Christian Punk is an oxymoron. No I think yer prejudiced ass hiding under yer stupid anarchy shirts are an oxymoron. Some people say that my relationship with God and other punks who have relationships with God are another aspect of what ruins punk. There are three things only that can ruin punk: MONEY, Racism and Sexism. Those things ruin the balance. I beg you to show me one example of religion besides Satanism that is affecting our society. What do you see on TV? You see sex, drugs, alcoholism, sexism. And what goes on every day? Hate crimes, rape, robberies, murder and death. Do you think that people who have faith condone this? Do you think that my relationship with Jesus Christ is promoting me to do these types of things? In my opinion, there aren't enough of us out there.

So what if I pray at night and I say sorry for the bad things that I did. How am I making you feel hate?

I know that back in the day when Punk was surfacing, none of the punk icons like Darby or Sid or Johnny Rotten wanted anything to do with religion. So then people feel that just because that is the way that it start-

ed means it has to stay that way. Do you realize that if everything that started had to stay that way for instance the US if everything stayed the way that it started, my brothers and sisters would still be slaves. I wouldn't be able to vote. Punk would not even exist. Things change (yes, even in punk). If religion is changing lives in our scene and making people happy, who is this going to hurt? It will only bother those of you in the scene who are either close minded or prejudiced.

And who cares if Mormons don't consume caffeine, it's another way of rebelling against big business. Straight Edge kids won't do drugs or drink that's another way of rebelling against society. Nudist won't wear clothes, yet another way. Punks that won't take showers, however unimportant, is still a form of resistance. I have a relationship with God, I won't eat meat, I won't drink or do drugs, I won't have sex, all of which society is telling us to do. How is this hurting you? Why do you care? NO ONE IS FORCING THESE BELIEFS DOWN YER THROAT!!! And you said you feel that religion always seems to "slap" you in the face, well I'm sorry but you must be weak for letting it get to you so much.

Not all "Christians" (I speak for Christianity because I'm most familiar with it) are truly Christian. Many are two faced. I'm talking about the ones who are good on Sunday. If you mix money and business with faith then it turns sour. Faith is not about the big rich "churches" like the Crystal Cathedral or about dressing in 500 dollar suits to church, or about 1,000 Hail Mary's. That's all fake. I'm talking about a relationship. Just like punk, if you mix money in it, it doesn't work

Remember Mr. Cronk, editor of *If The Bible Told You To Jump Off A Cliff*zine, Darby Crash had "NO God" and Johnny Rotten thought he was an Aptichrist and where are they now? Darby died a drug induced death and Johnny Rotten is doing pathetic reunion shows (he looks like Jenny Jones gave him a makeover). Diversity is Punk. Individuality is punk. Open mindedness is punk.

Hatred of diversity is what created, sexism, racism and homophobia, those are all aspects of the stupid society that I hate so much.

In yer letter you speak of religion, (per-

sonally I don't like that word, I would prefer to use "relationship" but for lack of better grammar) as a form of a control mechanism used on society to keep us all in check. You yerself have become a victim of society. You see, Mr. Cronk, society as I mentioned is in no way a reflection of religion. Society is an image of hatred and prejudice and you are a walking talking poster child for the picture perfect American Society. You hate, yer smart and you stereotype. You would make a good soldier

You bought into the lie of America being under God. America is under the \$bills\$. You should know this by now. It's a lie and they could all care less if you cheat on yer wife unlike Christianity. They could care less if you do drugs and destroy yer body and brain. They could care less if you were killed in their war, or on their streets. They want yer money and if you believe them because they hide behind crosses, then take a closer look. Christianity is a scapegoat to them and a way of life to me. You seem to have made a mistake.

As I said I don't like the word religion. I have a relationship with Jesus Christ. I feel better now, I'm off drugs, I can sleep at night, I'm taken care of and I feel that it is because I have faith. If this offends you, or if you feel that this doesn't make me punk, I know what is inside my heart and what I believe. I know where I stand, as a punk and as someone who is not afraid to say that I pray at night. Remarks and negativity can't take my individuality and knowledge away from me. And for all the punks, straight edge and indie kids that are afraid to admit it because of close mindedness in our scene (closed minds in the punk scene????!!) you are not alone.

D.C
Valinda, CA



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ISSUE #10 OUT NOW

Yup, issue #10 is out and it has what you've come to expect, and more, from someone who is actually willing to do ten issues of a zine. This time around I got Brutal Truth, Tortoise, Braid, Overcast, comics great Mike Allred, 78 Days, No Reason, and Order Of Decent under the gun. In addition I've added some columnists and more pages, and even some more spite. Look out, it's a big one. Issues 8 and 9 still available too (Unsane, Today Is the Day, Harvest, Brothers Keeper, Stillsuit, Grants Chair and Frodus, Geof Darrow, Another Victim, Dissolve, Botch, Lockjaw, respectively) for a buck apiece. Send \$2 to
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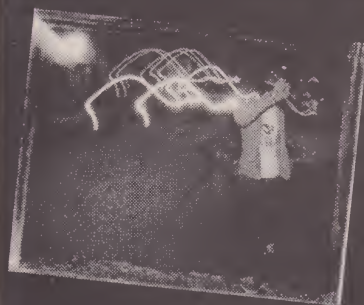
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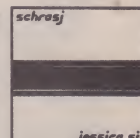


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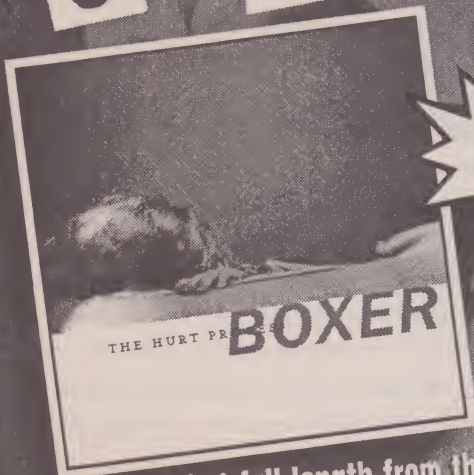


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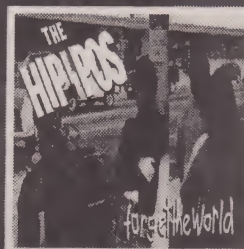
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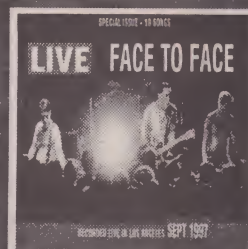
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Mr. Lefty Hooligan, a writer at The Other Punkzine, has taken up much of a recent column to boast that "his" hometown-Oakland, California-is a great place because it "scares Larry Livermore shitless."

Mr. Hooligan, who daylights as an accountant in the music industry, is stretching the truth a bit to describe Oakland as "his" town. He is one of many middle class suburbanites who have moved to Oakland in recent years for its relatively cheap rents and the easy commute to his job in San Francisco.

Parts of Oakland are beginning to be gentrified and, as it usually happens, the first wave of gentrifiers has some trappings of the counterculture. They're willing to put up with a level of crime and disorder that the next wave of new residents, the doctors and lawyers and executives, wouldn't.

The punks, who will put up with almost anything, are usually the first to move into a "bad" neighborhood. Next come the more middle class people like Mr. Hooligan, who, because he makes his living selling punk products, still considers himself part of the counterculture. Eventually, the poor and antisocial people, including the original punks, are forced out by people like Mr. Hooligan, who can afford to pay higher rents, and that's when the full-scale suburban invasion begins.

In the meantime, the punks and semi-punks can congratulate themselves for being "hard" and "streetwise" and "real" for living in a place more dangerous than the suburbs they came from. They can think of it as some sort of personal achievement that hundreds of people are murdered every year in "their" town, that the sound of gunfire is so common as to hardly be noticed, that being mugged at gunpoint happens so regularly that most people don't even bother to report it.

Mr. Hooligan argues that Oakland isn't *that* dangerous. The evidence he gives is that he himself has never been mugged. Using similar "logic," I can demonstrate that Detroit, aka Murder City, is also not a dangerous place: My parents, both of whom have lived in or around Detroit for 80 years, have also never been mugged. So I guess you Detroiters can quit worrying about crime in your town. It was all just paranoia and hype.

But one gets the impression that Mr. Hooligan is almost in favor of mugging, as long as the "right" people get mugged. Like yours truly, for example. In a rather stunning display of racism, he suggests that I should tape a sign on my back that says "Mug My White Ass."

It's well known, but rarely said out loud, that the vast majority of muggings are committed by young black men. Self-styled radicals like Mr. Hooligan fall all over themselves to avoid suggesting that certain types of crimes are racial in nature; but without even realizing it, he's openly stated his belief that not only do blacks commonly mug whites, but that whites probably deserve it.

Like many would-be revolutionaries, Mr. Hooligan is so eager to identify with any group of supposedly oppressed people that he forgets he himself is what the locals back in Detroit used to refer to as a "honky-ass motherfucker." You could use him as a poster boy for the white race, or at least all the worst stereotypes about the white race: emotionally and intellectually constipated, devoid of rhythm, soul, and most of all, humor.

Mr. Hooligan is the kind of gullible white person the Black Panthers took great advantage of during the 1960s. Clever operators like Huey Newton discovered that people like Leonard Bernstein and Jane Fonda would fork over vast sums of money to what was essentially a street gang masquerading as Mao-quoting revolutionaries.

No matter how stupid, violent, or self-destructive the Panthers became, there was always some silly social scientist or celebrity to rationalize it as an expression of "oppressed people's culture." Fast forward to 1998, and we have Mr. Hooligan getting all gushy and wet over some middle class teenage brats rioting when the police stopped them from driving their cars around a park. What, you might ask, is remotely radical about kids burning up massive amounts of fossil fuel and making life miserable for everyone else in the neighborhood? Well, um, the kids in question are black.

Once again, Mr. Hooligan's spin on things is completely racist. Can you imagine him being so excitedly supportive if the obnoxious cruisers were white frat boys? Not likely. He'd probably claim that by wasting gasoline the frat boys were oppressing the third world and were responsible for the Gulf War. But as long as it's black teenagers acting like morons, well, then, *viva la revolucion!*

This sort of racism is doubly pernicious. Not only does it view whites and blacks according to separate value systems, the same reasoning that produced three centuries of slavery and another of segregation, but it also presumes that blacks can not be expected to behave in as intelligent or civilized a manner as white people.

To people like Mr. Hooligan, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Like many middle class drones who lead what Thoreau called "lives of quiet desperation," he has been seduced by the visceral charms of barbarism. In his private fantasies, he sees himself as a loincloth-clad warrior impaling on his mighty spear the bosses and priests who have circumscribed his world.

When European colonialists first encountered primitive peoples, they developed the myth of the "noble savage." In this view, civilization was decadent and debilitating compared with the more "real" existence of aboriginal peoples. The myth persists to this day. To repressed radicals like Mr. Hooligan, inner city gangsters and racist, sexist rappers represent the modern version of the noble savage.

Civilization has had a lot of bad press and has sometimes deserved it. The monuments of Western culture have often been erected on the backs and broken bodies of the oppressed and unfortunate. The flowers of wisdom and knowledge have frequently been watered by the blood of the innocent and helpless. This will not come as a shock to any educated person; to know this is a prerequisite to understanding the society in which we live.

But while one must be appalled at injustice and do everything possible to set it right, some people go one step further, a step which takes them over the edge, into the realms of unreason. Here, I suspect, is where you will find Mr. Hooligan has made his home.

Mr. Hooligan's program of opposition to all authority (except, presumably, his own) is in itself a recipe for barbarism. So too is his eagerness to divide the peoples of the world into tribes based on their skin color or their wealth or their predilection for violence.

At the root of it is, one suspects, a deep self-hate. If Mr. Hooligan's formula for revolution were ever to be carried out, it is unlikely that he would survive. As a profoundly middle class person whose entire existence depends on a stable, orderly and technologically advanced civilization, he would be absolutely helpless in a world ruled by the hip hop hordes he sees as the shock troops of his Brave New World.

Mr. Hooligan is trapped by a crippling contradiction: While he professes to love the raw, rough character of his adopted home town, he couldn't survive there for a week were it not for his sworn enemies, the Oakland Police Department. While he worships at the altar of antisocial black youths, he is precisely the sort of white interloper those youths are most likely to prey upon.

What it comes down to is that there can not be different standards of behavior for different racial or social groups, and we can not have livable cities or a viable society if people don't feel free to walk the streets without having to look over their shoulder for criminals and stray bullets. Oakland is nowhere near as bad as some places. But it is nowhere near good enough, and by mindlessly defending it, Mr. Hooligan does a disservice to the city he claims to love.

If he really loved it, if he didn't see it as just a cheap rent bedroom community with some punk cred thrown in, he would be outraged that his town is so badly governed, so devoid of self-respect, so lacking in the physical and social infrastructure necessary to a functioning city. Instead, like many less sophisticated punks, he wears it as a badge of honor.

In essence, Mr. Hooligan is the quintessential yuppie. Or alternatively, if you will. He may not have a BMW, but he's got the self-absorbed and self-centered attitude that yuppies have made famous. He has no sense of loyalty to his community, no sense of obligation or responsibility. He treats it much as I imagine he treated his parents' house: as a place to crash.

He claims that Oakland "absolutely terrifies" me. That is not quite true. It absolutely depresses me, that much is true. In the 30 years since I last lived in Oakland, I've watched it deteriorate from a boring but reasonably safe working class city into a real shithole. That's not to say there aren't nice parts of Oakland, and certainly I know many nice people who live there.

But what a way to live. Downtown Oakland has become a ghost town, much like what happened to my home town of Detroit. Not all neighborhoods are dangerous, but large sections of East and West Oakland are practically free-fire zones. Public transportation is a bad joke. City government is controlled by criminals and incompetents, many of whom were chosen on the basis of their skin color rather than their abilities. The school system is dead broke, riddled with violence, and each year graduates a new crop of illiterates.

None of this seems like anything to brag about. I'd be ashamed to live in such a place unless I knew I was doing everything I could to change it. But Mr. Hooligan is doing absolutely nothing for his city. He won't even make the minimal effort to involve himself in local politics, though of course he feels free to complain when the "wrong" person gets elected mayor. He doesn't even believe in democracy, he tells us, which should come as no surprise.

Mr. Hooligan's brand of politics is in essence no different from that of numerous 20th century tyrants. The madness that sent millions of Cambodians to their death under Pol Pot, the murderous thuggery of Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution, the slaughter of millions under Stalin and the systematic extermination of millions more under Hitler all had their origins in someone's megalomaniacally irrational theory. As you may have read in one of those clever Lookout ads on the back cover: "There is nothing in the world so dangerous as an idea, especially when you have only one."

We can rest reasonably secure that Mr. Hooligan is not going to seize power in the United States any time soon. He will go to his grave muttering dark imprecations and hatching overarching revolutionary plots that 99.9 percent of the world's population will never know existed. But Mr. Hooligan is worth discussing because he typifies as well as anyone the waste and loss that has been produced by the (deservedly) much-maligned Baby Boom generation.

To give him his due, Mr. Hooligan deserves a certain respect for sticking to his principles, however silly they may be, while so many others his age have abandoned theirs. But he has managed to get it so wrong for much the same reasons that his fellow Baby Boomers have become New Age hucksters, stock market charlatans, Clintonian politicians, and useless drunks and junkies.

His-and my-generation blew it. There were more of us, we were more prosperous, healthier, better educated, more blessed with opportunity than anyone else in human history, and what do we have to show for it? Allen Ginsberg summed it up when he said, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness."

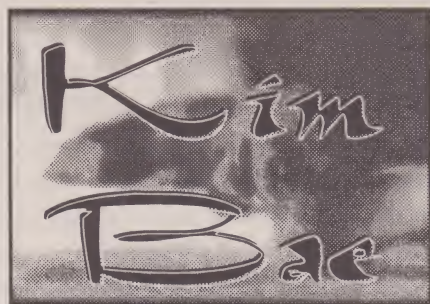
But it was a self-induced madness, fueled by arrogance and inflamed by a degree of self-indulgence that might also be unique in history. Where are our great artists, our authors, our political leaders? Many of them are staring blankly into space in some madhouse or prison cell, many more are physically or morally dead. Even the best of them are likely to have squandered much of their talent in an orgy of navel-gazing and self-glorification that has taken everything from society and given nothing back.

Those of you coming of age today do not have as easy a time of it as our generation did. The world is a harsher place, your future far less certain. Many of you will have to struggle valiantly to attain the education and

prosperity that the children of the 1960s considered a birthright.

If you are wise, if you are to learn from the mistakes of those who have gone before you, you will take full advantage of the opportunities still available to you. But you will do so with the knowledge that opportunities and responsibilities are one and the same. The foolish and short-sighted see education and work in terms of making money and attaining positions of power. These are not the men and women who will decide the fate of the world, unless, of course, those of you with the ability to do more fail to do it.

If you want to make your mark upon this world, if you want your life to be a beacon of light to the generations that come after you, you must work incredibly hard, and you must do so with the passion and joy that come from knowing your work is not for you alone, but for everyone and everything. It's not always easy—I would be lying to you if I said it was—but if you love life, if you love freedom and justice, if you love your fellow human beings, if you love this planet and all things great and small that live upon it, then may your lives be filled with work you love and love that works. There's really nothing else that matters.



Quote of the bi-month.

"[Since you've been in England] you've started smoking, drinking, and saying cunt so you might as well start eating cheese."

—Micky from Ebola in reference to me being the only vegan in a group of people that wanted to order pizza

Bar Codes

I'd been out of the country and hadn't seen *Punk Planet* since issue #21 when my friend Darren casually mentioned the bar code in passing. I was confused. "What bar code?" He told me about *Punk Planet* having one. I was much more than mildly annoyed. I was, in fact, pretty pissed about it. A punk zine having a bar code? One that I write for?! Straightaway I wrote to Dan who e-mailed me the explanation printed in #23. I wasn't convinced. I then sent him a barrage of questions concerning *PP*'s distribution, requesting more in-depth explanations of the bar code phenomenon, and threw in my harsh opinions on the whole mess. His reply was actually very convincing—which surprised me a great deal because I thought I was dead-set on quitting *PP*—and I made the decision to keep writing my column and doing reviews.

In a nutshell, loads of mom and pop book and record stores use bar codes for inventory which requiring distributors to slap one on. *PP* has actually had a sticker bar code on it since issue #3, unbeknownst to me. I was under the illusion that bar codes were only used by big chain stores and

that distributors only put them on products for these stores. I didn't know that many distributors also use bar codes for their own inventory purposes.

So you're thinking, "OK, but *MRR*, *HeartattaCk*, *Slug & Lettuce* and *Profane Existence* don't have bar codes but sell about the same number of copies." The same thought occurred to me as well. *MRR* has been around for so frickin' long that, according to Dan and Mordam, Tim Yohannon had enough influence to not have to put a bar code on it himself (though I've heard more than once that it sometimes has a bar code sticker just like *PP* used to). *HaC*, *Slug & Lettuce*, and *PE* are sold from what I can tell—exclusively through DIY distros which, of course, do not need bar codes. I've never heard of them being sold in Tower or Borders or many independent non-punk record stores.

MRR and *PP*, since they're sold in so many different types of stores, appear to reach more parts of the globe than any other zines. Personally, I really like it when I read a letter in *MRR* from a guy in Indonesia that said he relies on *PP* and *MRR* for information on the punk scene. I value receiving letters from and corresponding with people all over the world. I'm not saying by any means that you can't get other zines in say Latin America or Asia because I know that isn't the case. *MRR* and *PP* are simply more accessible. Those of you in the United States and Europe who don't like the idea of mall punks being able to buy a punk zine in a big store should consider places like Korea where the punk scene is very young and where exposure to punk rock is very, very different than in Western countries. Raise your hands everybody who bought her first punk record in a chain store (mine is up). All my non-punk friends buy *PP* at Tower or Borders. I see nothing wrong with that. I still don't like the bar code (Dan doesn't either) but I just don't think it's that big of a deal anymore. My friend Faiz, who does zine reviews for *PP*, said, "I really don't care. I myself am getting the bar code from the new Spice Girls CD tattooed on my arm. Anyway, I own too many things with bar codes on them to be able to criticize." Well put, I'd say. And no, I don't think it's akin to signing to a major label—that would entail some kind of contract with *Rolling Stone* or *Spin* or something. (And for fuck's sake will people stop bitching about the *Spin* article on *PP*? I've also seen *MRR* and *Lookout!* mentioned in there more than once but I don't hear anybody complaining about that. They obviously don't need cooperation from any zinesters/scenesters to do a writeup on them.)

At any rate, I love writing for *Punk Planet*. I think it's a great zine that keeps getting better with something for everybody. Dan has never told me what I can or can't say beyond the thematic column required for the art and design issue and has been one of my biggest supporters and defenders over the years. I was friends with him for years before *PP* ever started and trust his judgment. If anybody feels the need to present her or his argument further about the bar code, feel free to write to me or *PP*. For me, however, the case is closed.

Morocco

I've come to the conclusion that my main goal in life is knowledge. Vague enough for you? "Knowledge" encompasses reading books, experiencing different cultures and lifestyles, learning languages, creating art, trying new foods—almost anything really. I have an insatiable appetite for learning. My newfound love of traveling has really pushed my capacity for learn-

ing to its limits. Whether I'm trying to figure my way around a city, bend my mind around a different culture, or wrest my tongue and lips into a new language, I can think of no other more challenging or fulfilling activity for my soul. It has changed my perspective on virtually everything in ways that I can't explain or even understand.

My 22nd birthday was March 7. I decided I wanted to go somewhere kind of exotic. Iceland was too expensive and too damn cold so I headed for warmer climes and a new continent: Morocco. The week I spent there absolutely destroyed my former concepts of life and culture. Everything I saw except for maybe cars and the fact that most people had two eyes and walked upright was completely unlike anything I'd ever experienced or seen before. The smell of the air, the crazy twisted narrow "streets" (usually little more than footpaths), constant harassment by the locals in every conceivable form, mint tea, haggling in the souqs (shops), conservative Muslim culture—my brain was in turmoil. I was traveling alone so I didn't even have the benefit of discussing my feelings, observations, and/or general confusion with anybody else. I left before the culture shock wore off, feeling peculiar. There were some deep rattlings going on somewhere within me that I still haven't been able to shake off. How do people survive in a world like that? How is it possible that I exist simultaneously on the same planet as they do?

At first I was really excited by the constant invitations to tea and attention I was receiving. I was gung-ho about communicating with people I encountered and finding out everything I could about life, politics, art, religion and culture there. Unfortunately I came to realize that with absolutely no exceptions, everyone who was trying to talk to me (they were all men) either wanted to show me around for a fee, sell me something, or have sex with me—in many cases all three. Initially I took people up on their offers (except for the fucking, of course) because I figured that it was worth it in exchange for conversation. The guides I enlisted were incredibly friendly and full of knowledge about their local areas and I tried to extract personal or political talks out of people in the souqs in addition to the marathon-like haggling sessions. After the first few days my brain was so taxed and my tongue so exhausted (try speaking a mix of English, Spanish, French and Arabic for a week and you'll see what I mean) that I just wanted to be left alone to observe and absorb. I was also uneasy about the fact that people were friendly and accommodating only because they thought I was a rich Japanese tourist who would give them money. Being ripped off a couple of times didn't help either. In any case, actively trying to keep to myself was an exercise in complete futility.

The last few days there I made no attempts whatsoever to be friendly and was even openly hostile at times when someone was being persistently pesky. Just for the record I regret these instances, though at the time I really felt like a bomb was going to explode in my head. The ungraceful ways in which I (mis)handled some of these situations taught me a lot about myself and my flaws. Sure, I'd like to think of myself as an infinitely open-minded and sympathetic person, but I realized as I was leaving Morocco that I most definitely am not. Things that are different but still fit somehow into the scope of my understanding of the world can modify the way I think. I can even embrace them. Morocco was absolutely, fantastically new and I was not mentally equipped in any way—with any knowledge, background, or comparable examples—to deal with it. It didn't merely tweak my way of thinking—

it knocked my brain over and yanked the rug out from underneath.

Who the fuck did I think I was? Yes, I did want to go to Morocco to experience and learn about a different part of the world but I also chose to go based on affordability. I never stayed in a hotel that costed more than \$5 a night. Every cab ride was \$1 and bus rides were a pittance. An all-day human guide costed \$5. No matter what my intentions were, I was just another tourist in the eyes of the locals, which frustrated me but was perfectly understandable. It was not difficult to comprehend why they saw me as exploiting their economic situation in order to have a nice holiday. I was invading their cities and lives. My annoyance and hostility showed disrespect for them. How can I pretend to be a fighter for human rights all over the world and feign open-mindedness when I can't even empathize with a people just because they are so different from me? Of course it was not just the fact that they were different that bothered me, but the way in which they were different. I challenge anybody to go to Morocco and never once feel the desire to strangle somebody (going in a tour group and staying on a tourist resort would be cheating), but there still was no excuse for the disturbing mildly xenophobic feelings I left with. The realization that I'm just another gringo with an attitude problem and closed mind really did my head in.

I have had a lot of time to mull over my experiences there and recover from them. Since then I have been looking for ways to challenge myself further, to unearth my other flaws and conquer my fears. Someone recently asked me what I am most afraid of in the world and my answer was "being disappeared and tortured." The place I'm most afraid of is Colombia. Ridiculous as it sounds, I am preparing to go to Colombia next year to confront my two worst fears head-on. I've read a lot about the incomprehensible human violations and heard about backpackers disappearing there but in a perverse way it draws me to want to place myself in the ultimate challenging learning experience I can imagine. Hell, I went to Scandinavia without a sleeping bag, crossed the Moroccan border at night by myself on foot, and got beat up in Brazil—what more can I do to put myself in immediate danger?

Matters of the heart

It is my impression that people tend to think that I am quite cold-hearted and strong and rock-solid confident. This really cracks me up because I am endlessly seeking out my flaws, questioning and doubting myself, my viewpoints, and my attitudes about the world, and I am hard on myself in a way that I suspect is unhealthy. I'm a hypocrite. I'm ugly. I can't keep in touch with people. I know nothing. I can't quit smoking. I'm full of shit. I'm rude to people. I don't know how to express my emotions to people. I'm never on time. I'm selfish, pompous, boring and too sarcastic. Ad nauseam. Many of my close friends tell me to chill the fuck out and take it easy on myself, but I just can't.

Before I left England I became romantically involved with somebody who unconditionally adored me. No matter what I said or did he accepted and embraced me for who I am and boggled my mind with his consistently growing desire to be with me. He spent a third of his money on a bus ticket to watch me pack and run errands for a few days in Newcastle—he even ran errands for me! I was flabbergasted that somebody would ditch work and band responsibilities just to hang out with me (actually it was more like him watching me run around like a chicken with its head cut off. He found it "amusing"). He open-

ly articulated his feelings for and perceptions about me in a revealing, honest manner. He called me in Rome and sent me two letters within a week of being here. Now he's planning on coming here for two weeks in July to visit me. I've never had somebody act like this toward me before. My self-critical nature melted into a little lump when I was with him and currently dissipates when we talk on the phone (though I still can't help but wonder why he is so taken with cranky, obnoxious, annoying me). We didn't (and won't) spend enough time with each other to fall in love or anything like that but it kind of amazes me that in such a complex world and with my fucked-up take on life that something so simple could so easily and drastically alter my frame of mind. For the short period of time I was with him I felt like I was at peace with myself. He managed to touch me in places that had been growing hard and callous for years and yet he was armed with nothing other than the human desire to connect with somebody (yeah, I know what you were thinking when you read "touch" and "hard" but that's not what I meant).

I thought that I needed more crazy adventures, increasingly difficult challenges, and exponentially growing hardships to keep me motivated, inspired, and feeling like I am living my life to the fullest. He made me realize that the simple gifts of life are just as rewarding. And of course since I am incapable of expressing my feelings about somebody to him/her directly I had to write them here instead.

Thanks.

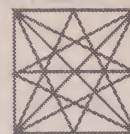
I'd like to take the time to thank everybody who made the past 6-7 months unforgettable for me. People have been so amazingly friendly and generous in ways that almost made me feel embarrassed at times because I could offer nothing in return. Even at the flat I've been living in for two weeks where I pay rent I'm treated like a guest with constant offers of food, drinks, and advice. Thank you all so much especially: Dumpster; Juan, Ebro, Jose, and Martin from Los Crudos; Elaine and Angelo- Santos; Tatu-Mogi Das Cruzes; Romulo, Alex, and Josimas-Sao Paulo; Chule, Lucas, Gato, and Nekro from Fun People-Buenos Aires; Joao and Pablo-Santiago; Mauro and his family-Las Piedras; Karin and Micky-Newcastle; Kathy, Nick and Sned-Bradford; Mark and Tim-Brighton; Jonathon-Southampton; Kirst and Andy-Glasgow; Brob-Gent; Simone and Steve-Dudelange; Paul, Yannick, Todd, and Carl from His Hero Is Gone; Lars-Hamburg; Thomas, Henrik, Matthias, and Hartmut from Y-Berlin; Michal-Chorzow; Matt-Prague; Dario and Michele-Rome; and my flatmates here in Rome: Katia, Luca, and Anita.

In closing

I seem to have had pretty good luck with e-mail and no luck whatsoever with receiving my snail mail. Please be patient, particularly if you've sent me a letter between December '97 and September '98. I'm still offering free articles on East Timor, Colombia, Nike (2 US stamps each) and Equal Exchange coffee (1 US stamp). If you live outside of the US send me a dollar for postage or a nice letter instead. Also offering *Let's Go Europe 1998* (battered a bit), *Lonely Planet Morocco* travel guide (battered a bit) and *Hostelling International Europe 1998* (barely ever touched) for postage money. First come, first serve. Write me for details.

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DARREN CAHR



STRANGE ATTRACTORS

I am going to write about whether war can be justified, eventually, but I'm going to do it in the most circuitous fashion imaginable. So try not to get too irritated with me, OK?

I'm at my cousin's house for a family event, and she's a vegan and I'm eating some strange protein dip which I have to admit tastes pretty good. But I'm really in the mood for a hamburger and I feel guilty about it, but not so guilty that I won't go out and get a hamburger after I leave, which makes me feel even worse, in a weird sort of way.

As you can probably tell, I'm not a vegan. I'm not a vegetarian, and I don't even eat particularly healthy food. In fact, the single largest segment of my diet is probably best represented by a series of chemical formulas (the formulas for various artificial flavors and preservatives sitting prominently at the top) rather than a listing of ingredients. I eat at McDonald's. I eat Twinkies. I eat with no remorse.

I'm not proud of this, mind you, but I have absolutely no willpower when it comes to food. I'd probably eat my next door neighbor if he tasted good (which would, undoubtedly, be a somewhat difficult project. He would be unlikely to volunteer, and would probably require some restraint. He would also not fit in the oven or on my grill, which would require dismemberment. I'm not sure which part of him would taste best, but I would assume that the loin and buttock would be tastiest. Slow cooked, or stewed, perhaps, in the manner of Jonathan Swift...) I realize this is all probably wrong. But then, there's something wrong with me.

Really. There must be.

I wrote a column a couple of years back noting the fact everyone-vegans included-eat life forms of some sort. The point I was trying to make was that everyone draws the line somewhere. Each one of us makes a value judgment as to what kind of life is important enough to preserve. That's fine. Some people will eat meat but not veal. Some will only eat organically raised meat. Some will eat fish but not meat. Some will only eat farm-raised, free-range chickens. Some won't eat any meat but will eat eggs and drink milk. Some will restrict themselves to vegetables. Whatever.

There are good reasons-health, environmental, economic-for following any one of those diets. I just want people to recognize that they're drawing a line and that there is no naturally occurring Rubicon separating the enlightened from the hoi polloi. Be happy with your own choice and feel free to try to convince me that you're right. Just don't tell me that I'm a bad person for disagreeing with where you draw the line.

To give an example: If I eat a hamburger, am I implicated in the death of an animal? Yes I am. If you eat a root vegetable that has been ripped from the ground, are you implicated in the death of a plant? Yes you are.

We're both guilty of assisting in the death of a life form, but no one (not even me) would argue that these are equivalent acts. Why?

Is it because a cow is cuter than a radish? Perhaps. Is it because a cow feels pain and a radish does not? Probably. What if the cow felt no pain-would that change the equation? What if the radish did feel pain-would that change the equation? What if everything we could possibly eat felt pain? Should we starve? Is the issue exploitation? If exploiting animals is a problem, what about people?

I'm not arguing for or against anyone's own personal line here. I just think that we owe it to ourselves to think about what kind of acts repel us, and why.

For example, I am against the death penalty. I'm against it because 1) it is applied in an bizarre, racist fashion; 2) innocent people can easily be executed by mistake; and 3) I don't think it's an effective deterrent. Notice that "killing people is wrong" is not one of my reasons. For reasons described below, I think there are some people who do deserve to die. A friend of mine, however, is opposed to the death penalty for none of the reasons I just described. She is against the death penalty because it is wrong to kill people. Period.

I believe that war can be justified for self defense. But what is self defense? My wife would say that self defense involves beating up bad people who may threaten you. I think self defense means that if someone attacks you, you fight back. I thought that the Gulf War was idiotic. My wife thought it was a great idea. I think that we have enough problems right here without trying to be the world's policeman-something the United States is lousy at anyway. She thinks that bad people should be shown the exit door and points to Hitler as an example.

I cite Vietnam back to her, but then I run into stuff like this: A couple of years back I did some work for the Commission of Experts of the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal, compiling legal reports on atrocities committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I was responsible for reviewing all documentation (public and classified) currently available to the United Nations about the far northwestern corner of Bosnia, and specifically the four regions of Bihac, Cazin, Velika Kladusa and Bosanka Krupa. The goal was to provide (to the Prosecutor's office) enough information to build indictments against the worst offenders, some of whom had actually been captured.

My personal responsibility was to chronicle what happened in the series of camps set up by the combatants, camps in which people were variously tortured, raped and murdered en masse. Women told of being raped two dozen times in a single day, men were beaten with baseball bats covered in barbed wire, children were tortured in front of their parents. These stories had the nightmarish quality of horrible dreams-the victims could barely believe that these things had happened, let alone to them and their families, and often their stories had a dazed, hyper-objective view of what happened, almost as though these atrocities had happened to someone else.

When you hear a young girl-in her own words-describe the experience of watching her friends get brutally raped, it is very different than hearing Peter Jennings tell you that "many, in camps, have died." One crime apparently ended in the presentation of a plate covered with eyeballs removed from Muslim torture victims.

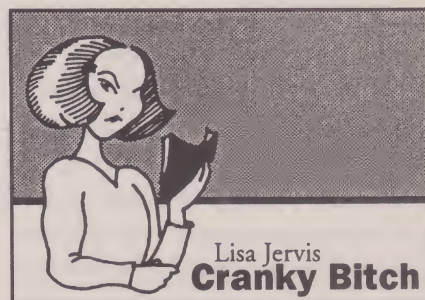
One of the people working on this project with me was a vegan. She agreed with me that the people who did this are monsters and deserve to die. She and I would like to put them in the kind of pain they inflicted on the thousands of women they raped and killed and tortured. How can this possibly be assimilated with my friend's vegan beliefs, or my opposition to the death penalty?

They can't. Which is my point. We draw our lines, and they move, and they shift throughout our lives. Perhaps one day I'll be a vegan who supports the death penalty and works for the Central Intelligence Agency. Perhaps one day I'll be a musician in a band on Geffen Records opening for Michael Bolton. Maybe I'll be homeless person shooting heroin in a back alley, robbing people for my habit and eating raw steak with every meal.

Your guess is as good as mine, and your line is as good as mine. And that's the way it is. We get our freedom but we lose our sense of absolutes. If we're willing to say that there shouldn't be any such thing as absolute morality, and justify our behavior as punks on that theory, where does it leave us?

Well, I have to go do the legal work for a vegan hamburger company (really, I do!) so have a good summer, and don't step on other people's lines...

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Jenny McCarthy is a modern feminist nightmare. Not because she has the perfect beauty-standard looks and has shown them off-all of them-in the pages of *Playboy*. Not because she has used her perfect beauty-standard body, often naked, to make her famous. I'm not that kind of feminist. I think posing naked is a) a perfectly valid choice, and b) a way to make bucks off some unfortunate byproducts of the male-dominated capitalist system. And I like to look at naked girls as much as the next guy.

You might wonder why I'm writing about Jenny McCarthy now. She's long gone from the pages of *Playboy* and the airwaves of MTV. Her NBC sitcom deservedly tanked early on (get this woman some writers, stat!) and she hasn't been heard from since. Until the other night, that is, when my boyfriend brought home *Notorious*, a new high-end "sex, love, and romance" magazine (well, that's what the cover says) exploring such topics as Tantric sex with supposedly more sophistication than, say, *Hustler* but with more of an erotic kick than *GQ*. Jenny and her boyfriend/manager Ray Manzella are on the cover; their blindfolds-and-latex photo spread is inside.

The problem with Jenny McCarthy isn't that she's a brainless bimbo, either-because she's not. The problem, simply put, is that she's too damn complicated. You expect her to have the standard on-display buxom blonde

shtick, with more to show than to tell. You expect her to be an simpleton who just smiles (and sometimes takes it all off) for the camera (especially when you hear that Manzella has been in charge of her career since the beginning, and that he has tried to propel other Playmates to stardom before her).

She knows this. Jenny McCarthy knows what we expect from her, and she uses it against us. Hers is a shtick with a twist: *I know what you think about me. I look like a sex bomb, and you think I should act like one. And I will, up until the point where I decide to fuck with you by making a grotesque face and talking about farts.* She consistently turns the bombshell persona inside out to become a slapstick parody not just of herself but of what we want from her. She speaks openly of how her top-selling cheesecake posters are airbrushed. She jokes about her relationship with Manzella and the views that other people have of it (I'm certainly not alone in pointing out his past career pattern): "I always say," she joked to *Notorious* writer Catherine Seipp, "I wear the pants and he wears the jewelry." "She's a shape-shifter: Her first *Playboy* shots were topless-girl-next-door-with-field-hockey-stick pure; her MTV persona was kittenish and raw; the *Notorious* pictures introduce us to a wiser, more-sedate-but-smoldering-even-hotter Jenny. This sheer variety speaks volumes about the genuineness of any of her incarnations: femininity at its most self-consciously constructed. I should applaud all this, as they are gestures with a feminist impulse at their heart.

But I gotta admit: When my boyfriend came home the other night and started talking about how much he respects Jenny, and how, yeah, her body's hot but it's really her *kookiness* that gets him, her absolute lack of fear at looking foolish, or having people think she's a brainless bimbo-I wanted to be skeptical. I wanted to chalk it up to her naughty-girl-next-door sex appeal and dismiss his genuine response to her talent and savvy about the role she plays. When he spoke of the *Rolling Stone* cover of Jenny with the hot dog-you know the one-and started talking about the style of the photographer and how that kind of cheesecake parody is right up his alley, I had a sudden impulse to put his eye out with my fork.

'Cause, no matter what you know about my boyfriend's taste, it can still be hard to look at Jenny and hear anything positive about her from a man in your life. I mean, I know I'm sexy, but not in the kind of way that would make teenage boys-or anyone-line up around the block to have me sign a picture of my bikini-clad self reclining on a shag rug. Most days, I'm more than OK with that. But hey, we all have our fits of self-doubt.

There's a problem aside from my petty, shallow insecurities: If Jenny McCarthy's smart, and I still think she is, I fucking wish she would act it sometimes. Call me ungrateful-after all, I just said she's doing her part to destroy the blonde bombshell as an American archetype-but I wish she didn't slip into that role so easily. I know she's parodying it from the inside, but sometimes I just wanna make it stop. If I truly believed everything I just wrote, then her skill at exposing the fakery of gender and the mainstream's definition of "sexy" would earn her a solid place in my feminist heart. And I can't quite bring myself to put her there. Maybe I just feel stupid admitting to a genuine admiration of her-after all, it's still possible to take the blonde bombshell thang at face value. Maybe I suspect she's playing me the way she plays *Playboy*. But you know, regardless of why I have trouble dealing with Miss Jenny, she has fixed me quite a healthy portion of food for thought. So can she really be a feminist nightmare after all?



I've refined my act. It's not an outward improvement-some would say the opposite-but more of an attempt for me to come to mindblowing realizations that I feel are so needed in my life at this time.

The story of my life is not feeling accepted.

At my old job I performed a great service to some kids in need, and one girl in particular made me especially proud. I spent hours upon hours tutoring her. It took months worth of work for me to help her grasp concepts she'd never been exposed to before even though she rightfully wasn't in agreement with them. When her day came to give her presentation of her work to the rest of the class, she performed beautifully. It was all I could do not to cry.

It was my last day on the job.

I really need to get out of here. It's all old shit repeatedly haunting me. I feel my days are numbered in this town but I can't see a way out at this time. In fact, I had a grand plan to move away and it failed in way too many ways untold.

Not knowing what else to do, I returned to the job after six weeks abroad. The girl, and one other, were happy to see me. They gave me hugs.

"Are you coming back?" they asked in earnest.

"If they'll have me," was my reply.

My lackluster response was perhaps fitting for how tacitly my return was viewed by those "in charge." I made my mark, and with a frustrated awareness, I knew I had to move on.

To where?

I left for Europe for five weeks with exactly \$15 in my pocket and returned home \$70 in the red but with \$20 for some grub. Money and I are necessary enemies. I've lost a few friends because of money mismanagement. What's funny is that I began with the noblest of intentions and I failed.

I'm not regretting it. I've seen so many come and go in my life that I now know with certain clarity that even if this is a statement of my infallibility, then I am destined at least for now to work with my wanderings because I know where my strengths are. Likewise, I know what possible repercussions my personality, my lifestyle and my views may have. People who I feel are with me in spirit will be back as certain as I will be. People who piss around with their own issues and put them onto me as a convenience... well, I can see things from their perspective, but that says nothing of their lack of personal growth.

I'm back to fulfilling my uncertain destiny. I'm back to drifting. I'm riding the shit from life. I'm starting anew. I don't hold regrets. I can't pity those who drive off cliffs anymore than I can pity myself. There are beauti-

ful things on the horizon, however polluted they are by karmic exhaust, and I'm gonna do my best to seek them out.

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Updates and other writings are here:

<http://users.intercomm.com/2ndguess/INDEX.HTM>

Or mail me at: PO Box 9382, Reno, NV 89507. Send a S.A.S.E. or stamp for a reply.



As some of you know, I have been exiled in Iowa for the past two years and at the beginning of June I came back to New York for good. I hit the ground running. This past month, there were two New York productions of a play I wrote called *Debt*. The play is about, among other things, a number of characters who are having trouble paying their bills. Last night was the last performance. Today I had a much needed day off, and for the first time in I don't know how long, I was going to sleep late and relax.

This past Friday, I received a shut-off notice from Con Edison, which is New York's power monopoly. I was as much amused as I was alarmed. I showed it to people and we laughed. You see, I have no account with Con Edison. My apartment number was on the bill, but not my name. My property manager, hypothetically, pays my electricity. I just pay the rent. On time, like clockwork, every month. Paranoid that I am, I try to do nothing that will ruffle the feathers of the housing gods here in NY. I live alone in Manhattan, an unheard-of luxury. In any event, when I received the shut-off notice on Friday, I called my property manager and left a message. He returned the call on Monday and asked me to fax him the bill. I did so.

This was Wednesday: My cat Fez woke me at 7:20. I fed her, and miraculously went back to sleep. I woke up again at 10:30. I was positively gleeful that I had slept so late. I laid there for a few minutes and made a mental list of all the things I needed to accomplish that day, a relatively pleasant experience on a day when I have no scheduled events planned and no apparent restrictions on my time.

Then the buzzer sounded. It was a long, unusually persistent buzz. Had my friend and upstairs neighbor Moira locked herself out? No, she would never buzz me in that manner. I went to the intercom and said hello. The response:

"It's Con Edison. We're here about your electric bill."

First of all, I'm half naked, I haven't had any coffee, and I feel grossly unprepared for visitors of any kind, let alone collections agents. I looked for my bathrobe, to no avail. I put on a big shirt and buzzed them in. Meanwhile, Fez, sensitive creature that she is, sensed the urgency of the situation and is began pacing around with a predatory look.

I am forthwith greeted by two men. The little one does all the talking. He is accompanied by a larger man who looks like something off the cover of a Harlequin Romance novel. The little one who does the talking informs me that they have come to shut off my electricity.

I said something akin to "No fuckin' way." I told them that my name was not on the account, that there must have been a computer error, blah blah blah. The little one said, "The bill gets paid right now or we're shutting off the electricity."

The bill is \$385.77.

I said, "You are not shutting off my goddamn electricity." I offered to call the property manager and have him talk to them. The little one shrugged as if he didn't really care one way or the other. It was then that it became clear to me that he actually WANTED to shut off my electricity; indeed, he was positively salivating at the thought of doing so. Meanwhile, the testosterone-drenched Fabio look-alike just stood there with his arms crossed, like a club bouncer who is called upon to break up a fight every five minutes. This is the kind of guy who Fez, that slut, would normally throw herself at in a fit of passion. Fortunately in this case she controlled herself. I actually looked at her and tried to telepath the words "Kill. Kill." Fez just jumped on a chair and proceeded to take a bath.

I called the property manager, a typical blustery three-piece suit asshole who is perpetually "on the other line at the moment" and if you ever do speak to him, he invariably insists on putting you on the speaker phone. "This is an emergency," I told the secretary. "Two guys from Con Ed are here and they're going to shut off my electricity." "Well," she said, "Do you pay your bill?" "NO," I barked. "YOU pay my bill. I pay my RENT." My spat out the word "RENT" like a bad taste. After a few minutes, she got The Man on the phone for me. As usual, he yelled "Yeah?" like he was yelling out a window. What is he doing, I always wonder, that he can't pick up the damn phone with his hands? I dare not speculate. I told him about Con Ed's henchmen and reminded him that I had faxed him the shut-off notice. "Will you please talk to these guys?" I asked. "Yeah, I'll talk to them," he replied. There was a shrug in his voice, as if he, too, couldn't care less one way or the other.

Long story short-the little guy who does the talking arranged something with The Man. When he got off the phone, I said, "OK, I have one question. It's my day off. What if I hadn't been here?" He informed me that they would have gone ahead and shut me off. "Groovy," I said. I looked at Fabio and saw that he had a little smile on his face, a "how 'bout this crazy world" smile. It was almost something like empathy. I think Fabio may be in the wrong line of work.

As far as I can tell, this was Con Ed's mistake. They should have sent that bill to the property manager, not to me. But did I get an apology, or even an admittance that they might have acted in error? No. Furthermore, upon receiving the shut-off notice that I faxed to The Man with my own money on my own time, perhaps he should have taken some action on it. Apparently, he didn't.

On their way out, Fabio said, "Take care." I said something like "I try." By this time, Fez was asleep.

I still have a list of things to do today, including paying my rent. I have considered inserting a note that says something like, "You people have to get your shit together. I have MY shit together. Why can't you get YOUR shit

together?" But I know that Betty or Sue or whoever in Accounts Payable will be the only one that sees it. The Man will be too busy doing whatever it is he does that keeps his hands constantly occupied.

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Violation Fez #6, the Religion Issue, is still available for \$1 from Leah Ryan, PO Box 2228, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108. The School Issue I've been promising for a year is still not even close to being out. Alas, I'm not even close. But if you want to e-mail a submission anyway, feel free: LEAHzz@aol.com



Columns **

It's quarter to one in the morning: the coffee's brewing, Ida is on the stereo, and I have garlic breath that could kill from 10 miles away. It's at moments like these that I can't tell whether I'm feeling happy or sad. I suppose I don't have to be either one. In a brief state of nothingness, I sit here like a ghost of my normally witty and charming self. Ha ha. It's zombification interjected with girly belches. Or is that a Riot Brrrp? It's a recent acquisition at any rate. I never really burped until my roaring 20s. Fascinating stuff.

"My back! My back!" as Jack Lemmon would say. The lumbago is my worst enemy. Sometimes it feels like it will be the death of me. OK, so I'm exaggerating. Itchy scalp, bad feet, terrible vision, etc. My body remains the source of endless bitching. Let's face it: The body=one helluva pain in the butt. Bah! Who needs it? Can you imagine me as "the head dude" from X-Men? Or was that Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles? He was just an ugly head floating in some contraption. My memory sucks shit. Must've been all that strong brew I drank in the States recently.....not. Now I'm going to go to bed tonight with thoughts of mutant superheroes on the brain. Oh boy, oh joy.

At least it won't be as weird as my dream the other night where Harmony Korine was my boyfriend. Yup. I don't even have a crush on the guy in real life, but there he was, being all tender and caring. I'm starting to think that the subconscious only exists to fuck shit up and destroy any set of convictions I once possessed about my hardass self. Buh-bye cool-boy, buh-bye coolgirl. No sex dreams of Hanson, thank you. Ixnay on the goldilocks action. Like that youngest Hanson even possesses the dexterity to hit a drum hard. Right-o. I think that kid is really one of those heinous twins from Full House moonlighting in the music industry. Kinda like a Keanu Reeves thang. Sorry Keanu baby, you'll have to excuse if I find it hard to take your music seriously. Shudder. Give it up peoples. It's like what's-his-face from E.T. "Boo hoo! Look at me everybody! I'm the washed up child actor of yesteryear, now trying my hand at the groovy guitar licks 'cos I can't get any work in da movies!

Waaah!" What is up with that? To quote Emily Sassy Lime, "save your drama for your mama."

And don't even get me started on the lameness of actors who have always dreamed of being "a writer" and so they put out some fuckin' inane novella-wankfest of whatever. If you want a few chuckles, go to the hard-cover fiction section of any major bookstore and cruise along them authors' last names until you hit either "Hawke" or "Travolta." Those are just a couple of choice examples but I think you'll see what I mean. They're vexing yet completely laughable and cause concurrent hoots and tears.

A little tale of yore from my youth was that if you laughed and cried at the same time you would grow hairs on your bum. Yes, these are the kinds of fears that accompanied my mindset in my formative years. And I guess that would mean even more bumhair for those who already have a lil' blanket of fuzz goin' on. Sheep-bum, if you will. Don't ask me how, why, when, or where I ostensibly absorb such myths. I grew up in a town where playing with driftwood and broken glass on the "beach" was normalcy. Standing in front of a whirring microwave would likely induce some crazy childhood flashbacks in me. I have frightening visions of a sea of mullets and snotted brats who were probably accidents. In fact, I don't think my hometown has changed all that much since then.

My older sister, Nancy, and I went back there a few years ago to see what things were like. We visited the old neighborhood we grew up in and both immediately started laughing and fingerpointing at all of the old, decrepit landmarks. Stagnation had that dirty little booger of a town wrapped around its pinky finger, with no release on the grip anytime soon. Our old grade school had a mountain of rubble off to one side of the building. It was a fitting image. Passing by the bungalow of a home I lived in for nine years was pretty weird. I don't think the new owners did that much to the house on the outside but naturally, it looked smaller to us at any rate. I wonder if any of the orange and green carpeting is still intact.

It is doubly weird how you tend to get possessive about the places that were once your personal abodes. For example: "Those bastards painted my room pink!" "But Patti, you don't live there anymore..." "So?!" You don't live there now, you don't pay any money on the place, and technically you have nothing to do with it. Enter cheesy theme song from Cats... now! Yep, how does the brain acknowledge memories for exactly what they are, when it is confused by the tangible evidence of time passage and those respective physical associations no longer belong to you. Is it proper to get so keeper-like over anything? Memories vs. actuality. Memories vs. the present.

For me, there is a fine line between nostalgia and depression. What is nostalgia worth in this day and age? A nickel? A quarter? 10,000 scenester points for those who preface every goddamn one-sided conversation with "back in the day..." Kids sell off their fake nostalgia for \$50 a 7-inch. Was that record ever worth anything to you? Transcend that with billions of dollars for the bigwiggies who commodify everything. They would scrape the plaque offa my teeth and auction it off at fuckin' Sotheby's if I were a Spice Girl or Leo DiCaprio.

By the way, just between you and me, I think I have a pretty decent chance of replacing Geri, aka Playboy Spice. Ya know, add some token Asian flava to the troupe. Here's the deal. I show up at

my Spice audition wearing nothing but a jewel-encrusted thong and a D-cup bra full of Jell-o Jigglers. Then I proceed to do my own special version of the "Running Man" interjected with a few floorpunches for good measure, all set to the *Fame* soundtrack. After about 20 minutes of yours truly bustin' out tha moves 'n' croonin', my raspberry-flavored artificial cleavage won't be able to sustain the body heat and will dribble on down my pumped self. Hence this will earn me the name "Bloody Spice."

Do you think I'm going insane? This is not insanity. Paul Auster's New York Trilogy is insanity. Blame this column on the heat, I say. I am wimpgirl when it comes to extremes of weather. Gimme a breeze or give me death. Gimme another coffee or give me death. Gimme a deus ex machina right now or give me death. Thank you, good night.

...

Patti "Desultory" Kim, Box 68568, 360A Bloor St.W, Toronto ON, M5S 1X1 Canada or fnabzine@interlog.com



"**M**aybe you should write a column about deserting your friends," he said. I'd be lying if I said that I didn't want my friends to be the least bit upset when I gave them the news. I mean, sure, everyone wants to be missed when they're gone. But I guess he took it the hardest because he just moved here. I knew there was a sense of sarcasm in his demeanor, but I was still hurt when he said it.

"I'm not deserting you," I told him. "We'll keep in touch the way we used to when you lived in Boston."

"There's certainly a difference of few million miles," he said. True. I suppose there is a difference between living just up the coast and moving to the other side of the planet. "What do your other friends have to say about this?"

My other friends are probably just used to me and my crazy ideas by now. They know that I'll pretty much try anything once. They've seen my major and minor transformations in all of their embarrassment and glory. Scott's probably seen it the most since we've been friends for close to a decade now, so when I told him about my latest opportunity, he seemed much less phased than the others. Rob was bummed because he's my best friend and I'm the godfather of his son, but at the same time, he knows me well enough to understand that once I get an idea stuck into my head, I'll be damned if I can get it out. And Lex, well, I can always count on her for a sharp and witty e-mail response. It just said, "Go."

"You have to think about *me* for a second here," I said. "I love my friends and all, but I can't justify staying in New York and living on a pizza diet if there's no real reason to suffer here. I'm not saying that I'll be going away forever. But if I don't try this now, I might never have the chance again."

I think he understood my point, but this guy can be almost as stubborn as I am. He could've just said, "I'm gonna miss you, man," and left it at that. But instead, he breathed heavily. "You're an asshole. Do you know that?"

I've lived in New York basically all of my life. I've tried leaving, but the attempts were mostly half-assed: New Jersey, Philadelphia, Boston. Lots of my friends made the big move to California, but I could never follow them there. I hate the beach and, truth be told, I kinda like those New York winters everyone seems to complain about. There's something about hot tea and toast in a heatless apartment that strikes me romantic. I like it here.

But you can't stay in New York without a reason. This city was tailor-made for the ambitious and driven and it doesn't hold very much promise for anyone who wants to live comfortably on the salary of a music critic. And let's face it: I never wanted to grow up to be a rock journalist anyway. Honestly, I always thought I'd end up an English teacher.

The past few months have been a financial and emotional mess for me. I've been watching all of my friends get married. Or having kids. Or starting careers. And the more I see people doing what they want to do, the more I've been able to realize that I'm just not doing that. I've been surviving, at best. I'm not really living.

Minette just picked up and moved to Italy on a whim. Vince told me that he plans to make his way to London by the end of the year. And Amanda just told me that she's going to South America in September to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer for at least two years. They all gave similar reasons for leaving: no real direction or responsibility; doing something while they're young; even just boredom of their current situations. I could relate to all of them while they told me their stories. And I told them to go for it because I wanted to go for it, too.

About two months ago, my friend Ryan told me about an offer he received for an education administration job in India. He said there was no way he could do something like that, but I tried to encourage him anyway. At best, a chance like this could lead to a career or a new life in a different place. At worst, he'll have gained a valuable life experience. Ryan wasn't buying it. I told him: "If I was you, I'd do it in a second."

A week later, I got an e-mail from the Director of the project wondering if I was *really* interested. I couldn't help but laugh at how hard it was to follow my own advice, even if I was determined to do it.

Here's a lighthearted list I made during the short, yet painful deliberation process:

Good things about India: Vrindaban is a spiritually potent place and is sacred to millions of people around the world. It's generally quiet and it's easy to appreciate nature there. Living in India sure sounds exciting, doesn't it? Most of the people who live in Vrindaban are literally modern-day saints. The food is good and, if I wanted to, I could eat spinach-

chickpea samosas all day. Mango Frooti drinks are better than Snapple Orangeades any day. Riding around on bicycle rickshaws can be fun. Little things, like seeing a native in a Dee-lite t-shirt, can take on a whole new meaning.

Bad things about India: You couldn't find a cold glass of orange juice there if your life depended on it. There's no such thing as tofutti and the ice cream is questionable, at best. Certain areas around town smell unrepentantly like sewage. (Well, OK, New York is the same way.) Brushing your teeth with bottled water is not so much quaint as it is annoying. And, oh yeah, Elliott Smith will probably never come to play there.

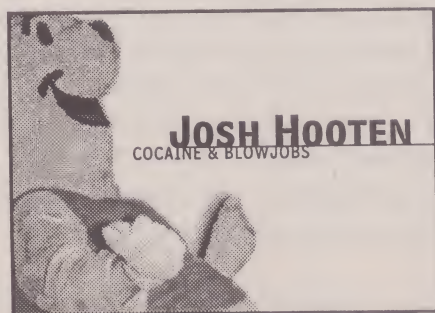
Tough call, I joked to myself. I'd trade in all the macaroni and cheese in the world for a hot plate of palak paneer and a 12-inch puri.

There are still a few obstacles that I need to get over before I leave—mainly applying for a long-term visa and finding a sublet for my apartment—but as it stands, it looks like I'll be going in October. Most of my friends have wished me luck already and almost all of them think it's a good idea—that is, except for him.

"If you go," he said, "then I'm leaving this fucking town."

At first I thought that maybe he should stick it out here, give it at least another year. But now that I think about it, maybe he should get out. He works two retail jobs that I know he hates and, like me, he often complains about feeling rather useless. He knows that non-activity is painful for the active mind and that's why I think that perhaps there's something more to his disapproval: Whether he admits it or not, I think that maybe he—more than anybody—knows exactly how I feel right now. And it's not about deserting my friends by any means. It's about giving myself the opportunity to grow on an emotional and social level while giving me the chance to finally do something other than striking a guitar chord or writing a Punk Planet column.

There are countless reasons to leave New York—if even only for a little while—but none is more important than having just felt like it. If I do actually get on this plane, I can't concern myself with anything other than my objective for leaving in the first place: "Make a change." Didn't I use to sing along to some band who said that once?



He's not breathing; he's not thinking; he's not digesting; he's not pondering; he's not watching television. He's just laying there in that box wearing too much makeup being viewed, cried over, mourned and ogled. Distracting amounts of makeup. Here I am looking into his casket, seeing my grandfather for the last time before he's

buried and all I can really think about is how much makeup they've put on him. In front of me and behind me are a hundred or so friends and family having said, or waiting to say, their final goodbye. Are they as preoccupied as I am about the makeup? Is everybody else walking up to the casket, looking in, and thinking about this too? Are we all going to look back at this day and remember how sad it was, and how the whole family was there and how many friends showed up to pay their respects and in the back of our minds always remember that makeup?

I haven't seen my grandfather in over a year. He seems much thinner than I remember. I can only see him from the waist up, but he looks really thin. My mother says he looks better now than he has in months. I don't know what she means. He certainly looked better when I saw him last, but since then he's been sick almost constantly. I think he looks like a network news anchorman. Like any second he's going to sit up and start telling us about nuclear weapons in India, or Viagra, or Gilligan being arrested for buying mail-order marijuana. He seems very dignified in his gray suit. For the life of me I can't remember ever seeing him wear anything but his denim overalls. My mother said my grandmother was adamant about making sure he was wearing his glasses when we all got to see him at the wake. She said he just didn't look like himself without his glasses. I think it would have been nice if he was wearing his denim overalls too. He wasn't a very formal man. Seeing him now in his suit, despite the somber setting of this funeral home, seems out of character.

I flew in this afternoon. My mother called me a week and a half ago to tell me to be prepared to fly down any day now. To be honest, I can't remember a time when my grandfather wasn't sick in some way. We've had close calls and varying levels of emergency before with my grandfather. He's been falling apart for years it seems, but this was apparently the worst it's ever been. I always knew the cause of death would be living an unrepentantly unhealthy life. Mostly smoking and a bad diet consisting of eggs and fried foods. I always respected that he knew these things were bad for him but consumed them anyway. I always felt he had a grasp on his mortality and knew his day would come. When you've been sick for as long as he has I guess you've got plenty of time to ponder these things and make peace with the whole idea. I don't know if it's just my family, or if it's a prevailing belief in the South, but what I kept hearing my mother say over and over in that last week was that the day you're born there is a day you'll die out there and there's nothing you can do to change that. And in my grandfather's case, if you never seem to be getting any healthier, why shouldn't you indulge yourself a few vices?

My mother, father and brother all dressed up waiting for me in the terminal, so we could drive straight to the wake. I don't think my mother is crazy about my dyed black hair and tapered black dickies. "Christ son, you look like a back-up singer for Locust. When's your seven-inch coming out on Gravity?"

There's a very vague sense of sadness in the long ride to the funeral home, but for the most part it's the same non-probing small talk we always use to pass the time with my mother and father. Nothing in my family is ever grand tragedy nor heroic triumph. Everything is accepted middle of the road with tempered emotion or no real emotion at all. I think we're scared of each other.

Depending on which brand of voodoo you subscribe to, my grandfather could be any number of places right now. The tenets of the voodoo of choice here tonight provide that he is "in a better place." That he's "at rest." And that he's "found peace." This is what their Bibles tell them, and this is what they truly believe, but it doesn't seem to be providing anybody with much comfort. Everybody was holding it together pretty well until my grandmother walked up to the casket, looked in, and bent over weeping. They were married for something like 50 years. They were never separated, never divorced, and still slept in the same bed. Nobody ever left town on a business trip; nobody ever went anywhere. They were literally together every day for 50 years. She was with him day and night, hardly sleeping, hardly eating the whole time he was desperately ill. They raised four children together and have countless grandchildren and a handful of great-grandchildren. All the women began crying too, and all the men stared solemnly down at the carpet. I didn't know what expression I should have so I looked over at my brother but he didn't seem to know either so we just stared blankly at each other like our heads were television screens.

I felt like a spectator instead of a participant. I didn't feel like these were people I knew. I kept walking around giving people a generic look of distant false apathy. I didn't feel real loss or concern. I became very conscious of my facial expression and tried not to give myself away as an uncaring bastard. The truth is that I've never been close to any of these people. I care about what happens to them about as much as I care about what happens to strangers on a train or the people that call me trying to get me to change my long distance service. I don't have anything to do with these people and I never come here. Their lives begin and end in each other's company here in Alabama. Their universes are completely contained within the state limits. A few have occasionally ventured beyond state lines, but nobody gets far and they always come back. Nobody is trying to escape; nobody is trying to broaden themselves. Life isn't a mystery to them. Life is laid out in front of them. They will all end up the same and they will be happy to do so.

My mother just informed me that the quirky little good-natured man who just interrogated me about my grandfather for 10 minutes is the minister who will be speaking at the funeral service tomorrow. He's going around talking to different members of the family collecting stories about Pop to share with everyone tomorrow. He's trying to construct a charming grandfather we can all remember forever by sampling bits from each of us. Unfortunately, my image of my grandfather isn't a flawless one. I could tell him about the countless holidays and I remember from my youth where my grandfather and uncles would keep everybody entertained with nigger jokes and how I wanted to cry and yell at them to shut the up because my best friends were black. I could tell him how they all referred to black people as monkeys. I could tell him of a particularly unflattering retelling of the day Martin Luther King Jr. and thousands of civil rights activists marched through Montgomery right in front of the restaurant my grandmother owned. How all my family was inside the restaurant scared of all these marching black people who were fighting for basic respect as human beings. I could tell him of the handguns and rifles that were always present in my grandparents house to protect them from the black people. Black people who as far as I know

never gave them any reason to fear them or hate them.

Instead I tell the minister that I haven't really spent a lot of time here in my life so I don't really have the stories that everybody else probably will. I don't tell him that my relatives' unapologetic racism is the sole reason I will never be close to them, will never visit them, will never really be concerned with what happens to them. I'm only here because my mother wants me to be here.

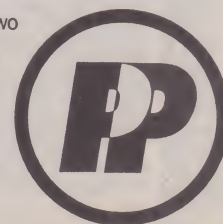
I look over at my father. He's here because my mother wants him to be here too. He's trying to hide the same selfish self-interest that I am. I feel closer to him now than I probably have in my whole life. Not close like "let's put all these years of mutual disappointment behind us and go get a beer and really get to know each other for a change" kind of close but close like "I know we're both struggling with the same agitated disinterest, and struggling not to be found out." He'd rather be at home fishing or playing golf or getting drunk on wine sitting on the couch watching ESPN. He'd rather be in his garden. He's never felt close to these people either. He's never felt very close to his own family.

This side of my family has never had a suicide or a divorce or a tragic accident. Nobody seems to be an alcoholic or a wife beater. Nobody appears to be molesting their children. There are no artists or writers or musicians. No doctors or lawyers or politicians. No criminals or preachers or war heroes. They are god-fearing, invisible, mostly harmless people. No cancer, no genetic predisposition to premature balding. Nobody is tall, nobody is short. They pay their taxes and believe what they hear on the news. Cities are scary, crime-ridden places. They work hard and look out for each other. They like sports. They read the Bible and go to church. They drive pick up trucks and sports cars. All of them can ride a horse. They don't know anything about me and I don't even know all of their names.

The loss of my grandfather doesn't dramatically affect my life, but to most of my relatives this is the biggest tragedy they've had to deal with. It was really quite beautiful to see them all come together and support each other for the three days that I was down there. It's not something I've ever felt before and, though I wasn't really a part of it, I could still feel the strength of it.

It makes me feel like an asshole to speak badly of my family, but they embody a part of society that I absolutely despise. They are racists. We're all racists to some degree, but they refuse to try and see beyond it and to work through it. They are unapologetic about their racism. They don't think there is anything to apologize about. I've managed to escape it because my father and mother joined the Air Force when they were young and traveled all over the world. My parents defeated most of their own racism this way and with my brother and I it pretty much ends.

My cousin Paul is almost exactly the same age as I am. His mother and my mother are nearly identical-looking. Paul and I grew up in the same time period, had all the same popular culture references, were both exposed to public education and were raised by two women who are practically the same person. Paul and I are as different as two people can be. Paul and I and everyone in this funeral home look into that casket and around the room and see the sum total of our families all mourning the loss of my grandfather. We all look around this room and we see very different things.



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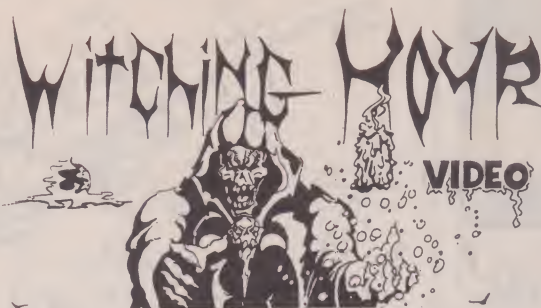
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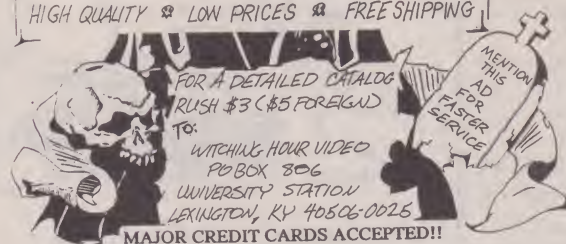
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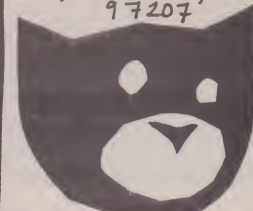


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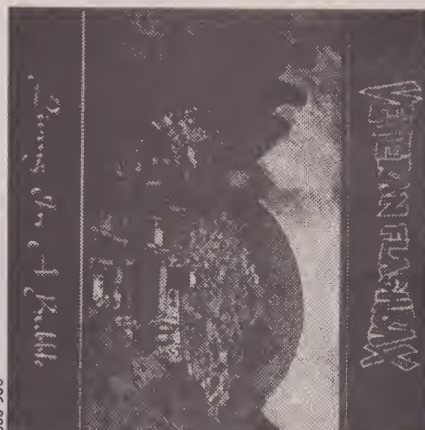
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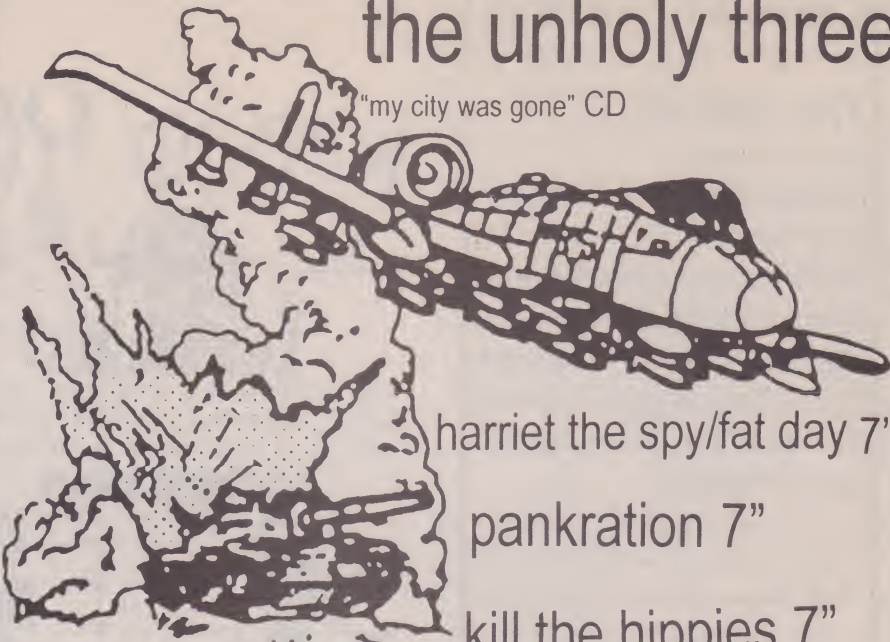
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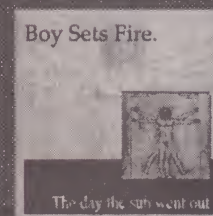
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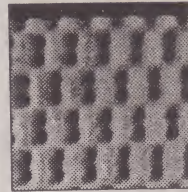
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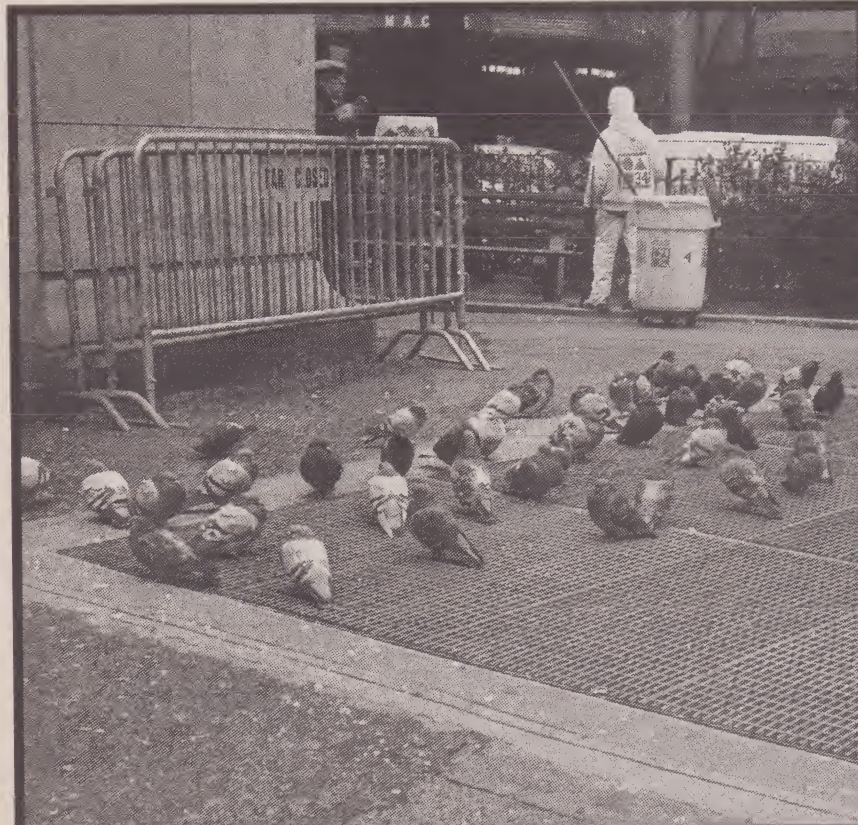
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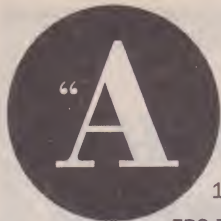
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belief in instant revolution," Kathleen Hanna wrote in 1991, "is just what THE POWERS THAT BE want. That way we won't realize that WE ARE THE REVOLUTION." She said a similar thing when her band, Bikini Kill would play live, demanding "REVOLUTION GIRL STYLE NOW!"

Kathleen Hanna was a revolutionary. Kathleen Hanna is a revolutionary. Her words, along with those of fellow bandmates Tobi Vail, Kathi Wilcox and Billy Bathgate and sister and brother bands like Bratmobile, Heavens to Betsy and the Nation of Ulysses filled the early '90s with dreams of insurrection—of an army of beautiful kids filling the streets and saying "stick 'em up motherfucker, we've come for what's ours." It was a stirring image, full of piss and vinegar and kids in good clothes. But as so often is the case with stirring images, they're very easy to co-opt.

It's 1998 now, seven years after "revolution summer" and the Spice Girls are the biggest band in the world; the Lilith Fair is fast on the way to being the biggest-grossing summer festival again this year; and *Titanic* has made half a billion dollars at the box office largely from, according to *The Nation's* Katha Pollitt, "Women—especially teenage girls—whose repeated viewings, often in groups of friends, have made *Titanic* the highest-grossing movie in history." Yes, it was a revolution all right: Women were finally recognized as a market force that stretched into the previously male-dominated realm of entertainment.

So what happened? How did "revolution girl style now!" get turned into a marketing scheme? Two words: the media.

"Like she-devils out of Rush Limbaugh's worst nightmare, a battery of

young women with guitars, drums and a generous dose of rage stampeded into popular consciousness earlier this year," gasped *Rolling Stone* in July of 1993. "They do things like scrawl SLUT and RAPE across their torsos before gigs, produce fanzines with names like *Girl Gems* and hate the media's guts. They're called riot grrrls, and they've come for your daughters." It was an attitude that reverberated throughout the media that year. Everyone from *Newsweek* to *Seventeen* wrote about Riot Girl. Even *Scholastic Update*, a trade magazine for teachers, included an article whose main focus seemed to be how Riot Girl poses a threat to more "traditional" girls organizations like the Girl Scouts and The Future Homemakers of America.

In talking about why many Riot Girls wouldn't talk to the media, an early article about Riot Girl in the *New York Times* contained an eerily accurate quote from one girl: "[Riot Girl] is just something that's really important to me and I'm afraid of it being exploited."

This unnamed Riot Girl was exactly right. Riot Girl *did* get exploited. Even though Riot Girl—at best an informal network of girls across the country—attempted to instate a media ban, the message still got out. Perhaps in part because of the media ban, the tenets of girl revolution became free game and slowly became twisted around to the point that now we've got five (err... four) women in wonderbras telling us to "Spice up your life."

Bikini Kill pressed on, through the bright lights of the mainstream media and the unrelenting scrutiny of the punk press, touring the US repeatedly and releasing three albums, numerous 7"s and one split LP with the British band Huggy Bear.

The vehemence fanzines large and small reserved for Riot Girl—and Bikini Kill in particular—was shocking. The punk zine editors' use of "bitches," "cunts," "man-haters" and "dykes" was proof-positive that sexism was still strong in the punk scene. Kathleen Hanna received the brunt of this criticism, often times being harassed verbally at shows, yet she seemed unshakable. But then something happened.

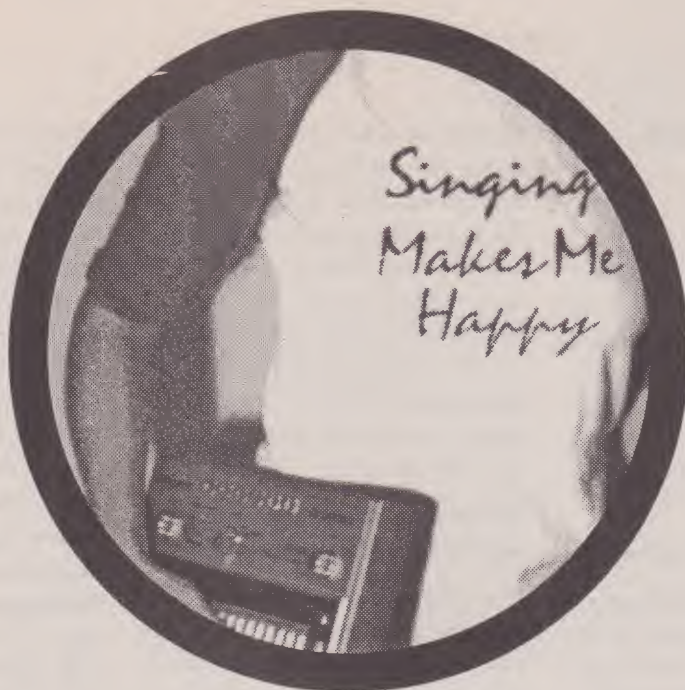
After the release of *Reject All American*, Bikini Kill's second full-length album in 1996, Bikini Kill seemed to disappear. Rumors of a break up circulated regularly while the official line was that they were "just taking a break." It took two years, but the rumors proved true. Bikini Kill broke up in the beginning of this year.

During those two years, however, Kathleen kept herself busy recording a solo album, soon to be released by Kill Rock Stars records under the stage name Julie Ruin. The album is a major step away from Bikini Kill's signature noise and passion. Recorded almost entirely by herself, the album feels much more personal. Crashing guitars and screams appear on a few tracks, but most of the musical fury so prevalent on Bikini Kill's recordings has been replaced by drum machines, vocal harmonies and undistorted guitar. The record is a testament to the fact that Kathleen Hanna will not allow herself to be defined solely by her legacy.

In late June, I got the chance to talk with Kathleen for over three hours about the past, the present and the promise of revolution. This interview came out of that conversation.

Interview by **Daniel Sinker**

Photos by Tammy Rae Carland



So Bikini Kill is officially over?

Yes.

What happened?

I don't really want to talk about it 'cause I care about everyone in... I almost said "my band" because it's hard for me to believe it's over. For me, it was time to do something else, but I can't speak for everybody. Any kind of breakup is hard... I wouldn't just go around talking about my friendships with other people.

It sounds like you regret that it's over.

No! I'm really happy with how things are now. I don't regret that it's over at all. But I also don't regret doing it. I loved being in that band. It was one of the funnest things I've ever done—but there will be other fun things too.

Was the Julie Ruin project started before the Bikini Kill breakup?

People are going to say, "Oh, she's gone solo," but that's not true because I finished this record before Bikini Kill broke up. I started it because I wanted to be working a lot. I was just kinda going crazy. Also, I got fed up with rock music—I wanted to do something I didn't know how to do. There's something to be said about working by yourself. You can discover things that you can't discover working with other people. This was a really interesting way to see what was going on with me and not have to always wait for people to get ready for practices and stuff like that. There's a lot of legwork being in a band—a lot of phone calls and things. It was nice to just do something by myself.

When a band records, you all have to be there and hammer it all out at once but with the Julie Ruin album, you did everything yourself, right?

I did have some help, but I wrote all the songs and played pretty much everything

myself. In Bikini Kill, we wrote everything as songs and played them live and then went in and recorded them. With this, the writing and the recording happened at the same time. It's a totally different way to write music. I wanted to be able to have my breakfast in the morning and then start working. I wanted to work on it when I felt like it instead of being like, "OK, from Saturday from Monday, you have to record your whole album."

At what point did you realize you were actually putting together an album?

Not until I was done mastering it. I didn't really have an audience in mind a lot of the time. This sounds really cheesy and like I'm being a gross artist-person, but I was compelled to do this by forces unknown to me.

I can imagine that working without an audience in mind was pretty liberating. Bikini Kill had so many expectations placed on it that being able to work on something where no one was expecting it to sound a certain way or to say certain things must have been pretty exciting.

Yeah. I think you hit the nail right on the head! It was important for me to do.

So many people laid claim to Bikini Kill both as a really positive thing and, conversely, as a very negative thing. What was it like to be in the middle of that?

I have to think about that for a second. [long pause] I think for me, the frustration stems from being a woman who wants to do art. What's really frustrating to me is all the sexist shit that you get and then all the capitalistic shit, which is basically people being really competitive. It sucks because there is enough to go around for everybody. But the fact is that some rich white businessmen are hoarding it and we're supposed to be down here fighting for the crumbs and that causes a lot of problems. I know this sounds like it's off

the subject of what happened with Bikini Kill, but to me it's not. I don't think it's a phenomenon with the band that I was in. I think it's a phenomenon with capitalism. ¶ Sure, it's really awful and frustrating when people don't even know you are saying all this shit about you. But at the same time, people bought the record and paid attention to us. I feel really lucky that people listened to what I had to say. ¶ Some people think that anybody who is ever in the public eye becomes an object that they can banter about like you're not a person. That's why my new stage name is Julie Ruin—when people would say fucked up things like, "Kathleen Hanna is this," or "Kathleen Hanna is that," it was really disturbing. But when they say that about Julie Ruin, what the fuck do I care? She's just a character I created.

I'm curious how Julie Ruin differs from you.

She's a part of me. She helped me go through some hard things the last few years. I know that sounds kind of weird. I'm not trying to glamorize multiple personality disorders or anything, but I do think that people are total miracles. We have really intricate ways of surviving and we create things that aren't there in order to get us through. That's what I do sometimes. Julie Ruin was more confident than I am. She was able to say, "I'm a fucking artist and people can't treat me this way anymore."

Treat you what way?

Like shit! Like total shit. I don't know of that many musicians and artists who have been treated as badly as me and some of my friends have. That's just a fact. I know it because I lived it. It can be really painful to have to face how fucked up shit is and how scared people are.

Scared of what?

Scared of being alive. Scared of things that

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are amazing. Scared of things that aren't like television or aren't dead. A lot of people can't deal with three-dimensional human beings, they only know how to deal with other products—they see themselves as other products. When the world only treats you like a dot on a marketing scheme, you can learn to treat yourself and other people like that. I think that's part of the reason for some of the bad treatment. But Julie Ruin is just like, "Whatever. You have to do what is fascinating to you." ¶ she wanted to write an album, so I helped her do it. [laughs] We made it together. Plus, I wanted to reward her for how she helped me and she really wanted an album. So I gave her one.

How did you approach this album musically? Was it different than how you had written songs in the past?

One thing that I get asked a lot is, "Are you trying to put a message out in your music?" I've always thought that was really weird because there are so many messages in it. There's a message in terms of how you make something or how you run your business or how you create a product or a musical sound. Then there's a message having to do with what it sounds like. And there's a message in the translation of the lyrics. People are always like, "What's more important, the music or the message?" And I don't understand why they have to be oppositional to each other. ¶ The music versus the lyrics is the age-old dilemma—with artists, it's the content versus the technique. I think it's really awesome that I get asked about that so much because essentially I'm being asked about content and technique, which is what a lot of artists struggle with. ¶ I've been reading this really great book called *Lesbian Ethics* by Sarah Lucia Hoagland. It's really helped me deal with a lot of things that have happened in feminist communities that I've personally

witnessed. The book introduces this word called "autokeny," which means "the self in community." In Western culture, there's this whole thing of how it's the individual versus the community. People get freaked out when there's any kind of political movement because they're going to lose their individuality. But autokeny is about how your individuality can reinforce your sense of community and your sense of community can reinforce your individuality. I think that's such a great concept. I was thinking about that in terms of content and technique and music and lyrics. I try to have what I'm doing musically reinforce what I'm doing lyrically and vice versa—have them communicate with each other instead of locked in a war to see which one is more important. ¶ Did you ever read that John Berger book *Ways of Seeing*?

I think I did in my sophomore year of college.

It's a total sophomore year of college book. In the book there is that whole idea about how women appear to be something, but they aren't actually that thing. How men supposedly emanate from their being within and just act how they act while women want to look like they're sad, so they buy a sad outfit. That influenced this record a lot. I didn't want to write a song where I'm singing about being sad, I wanted to write a song that would *sound* sad. If I wanted to evoke a certain feeling, I wanted it to sound like that feeling instead of just talking about it.

How difficult did you find that transition? That's a pretty major shift in thinking.

I had some practice at it because I wrote this fanzine called *April Fools Day*, which was about the connections between drug addiction and oppression. When I was doing that, I was trying to learn as a writer

the same sort of technique. I wasn't trying to talk about something from the outside, I was trying to talk about it from the inside. I wasn't trying to show it, but instead having the whole thing—the text and the images and everything—feed into a larger whole. Nothing was disjointed and separate. I was thinking about this idea when I was writing that fanzine so when I started making that music, it flowed into that. ¶ I was also thinking about the French feminist concept of "writing through the body." It's a really interesting idea about sentence structure being linear—it has a point; it has a verb and a noun and it goes somewhere. In that sense, it's really similar to the male orgasm. Plot structure in books and movies are also similar to the traditional ideas people have about the male orgasm—there's the foreplay and stuff and then three-quarters of the way through, it's over. "Writing through the body" is about trying to come up with an alternative to that. I was trying to do that musically. ¶ I was also thinking about fucking with language. About not using language for the purpose that it's always been used for: communicating in a clear and logical way.

Let's talk about capitalism in relation to Bikini Kill and Riot Girl for a second. Both of those phenomenon caught an incredible amount of media attention. At a certain point, it seemed like all of you lost control of your own representation. It became larger than any of you and mutated into something really different. So now we're at a point where Rolling Stone declares last year as the "Year of the Woman..."

So what is it now? Thanks for our year! I think it was Paula Poundstone or some other great female comedian who figured out that they told us it was the year of the woman when there were only three



It's scary to see something that at one point in time was really important to you turned into a sound bite.

months left in the year—so really it was the three months of the woman!

What do you think went wrong there? Do you ever wish that things could have played themselves out differently?

I don't wish anything was different. If anything was different, I wouldn't be where I am and I wouldn't have the friends I have. I wish certain people hadn't died, but other than that, I don't have any big regrets. ¶ As far as the mainstream media goes, when it first started happening of course it felt really fucked up. It's scary to see something that at one point in time was really important to you turned into a sound bite. But I still get a lot of really cool mail from girls all over the world and that's definitely a result of the media attention. ¶ When I was growing up, I didn't have access to fanzines. I didn't know about punk. Growing up in DC, it seemed like most of the people who were into punk were private school people. The public school kids had no fucking idea—we had feathered hair and were listening to Molly Hatchet. I can't change the fact that I didn't have access to it, so I don't want to be an asshole by saying "You heard about it through *Rolling Stone*, so you're not really blah blah." ¶ But it's gross when things like Riot Girl or feminism become a product. It's like, "Let's get it in as many magazines as possible so then everyone will know about it." I don't necessarily think that's the way to go about things because that's still reproducing a market economy. That's still saying, "Here are the managers that know the product that's best for you and you're just the stupid consumers that are supposed to consume it." Whether that product is feminism or that product is Colgate, as long as you're using those marketing concepts, you're still treating people like they're idiots and you're still reinforcing capitalism. I have a lot of mixed feelings about it. ¶ Do you remember the show *Night Flight*?

Yeah, they showed *Another State of Mind* like every three weeks.

Yeah! That's how I learned about punk. That was one of my main influences when I was younger. I didn't do anything about it for years, but I knew it was there and just knowing it was there made my life a little easier.

It's the never-ending argument about access to information. I'm stuck in the middle of that argument right now because of the barcode on the cover of *Punk Planet*.

I've had a similar problem. I was in this video. I was fucking broke and I thought it would be fun because I wanted to see how major rock stars made rock videos. Anyway, I got 200 bucks, which helped pay my rent. People were really pissed off at me about it and said I was a big sellout. I figured out who most of the people were who were pissed and they were people who live at home with their parents and don't pay their own rent! I care what kids think, but it's a different thing when you're out in the world and you have to pay your bills. I'm not saying that I'm going to sell out to Sony. I'm just saying, cut people some slack. If you're putting something nourishing out in the world, you have to nourish yourself too. Who gives a shit? Why is a barcode such a big fucking deal? I don't see what the big deal is! ¶ What if you work really hard to put out your fanzine and you spend a lot of time on the writing and you can't afford to give it away for free? What if you don't have a dad who has a secretary who will xerox them all for you for free? If you spend all your money on printing a zine, you can't really afford to not get paid. Meanwhile, the kid who has the dad who's secretary xeroxed them can all go to a show and give them away for free. That could make you feel really fucked up if you can't afford that. All I'm saying is that

certain people can afford to be more generous than other people and it's important to look at that. ¶ In second-wave feminism, there was a similar problem. There's a lot of really good stuff in this book *Daring to be Bad*. There's this concept about how if you're successful, you're being "male" and I've always equated it with the punk thing of if you're trying to earn a living, you're being "capitalist." I think the basis that both of these arguments stem from is the idea that power is always corrupt and that it's not possible for anybody to have any kind of power without being an asshole with it. That's a really pessimistic idea. It allows the oppressors to define what success is. I think there are a thousand variations on what success is. Why can't we take over the word success and have different forms of success that are about doing the things that make us really happy without sacrificing ourselves? Why is sacrificing yourself the highest order of the day in Western society? It's sick! I'm not saying that everybody should start businesses and become capitalists and fuck people over. It doesn't have to be like that. We can try to create alternative models for economic systems. ¶ It scares me because I don't want to be reformist. I don't believe in reformism. I don't just want my piece of the pie. I believe in revolutionary action. I don't believe in trying to change the system as it is because the whole system has to change. In a way, I'm contradicting myself because I'm saying that we need to earn a living, but the ultimate goal is that we change the entire system. But unless we build models—even small little Lego ones in our houses—we're not going to figure out how that's going to go about.

By saying that by success you're being "male" or being "capitalist," what does that leave us with? No dreams and nothing to strive for.

It's so frustrating because I say these things and yet I have met feminists where their whole thing is about getting ahead within the system the way it is. They're still defining success in the same way as it's always been defined—by money and by how much control they can have over their environment. I'm really frustrated with feminism that doesn't have an analysis of capitalism, or anti-capitalism that doesn't have a racial, feminist or real class analysis. ¶ In Yugoslavia, the workers owned all the means of production but they still had to compete with each other because the people who were buying the products still wanted to buy the cheapest ones. There wasn't a re-thinking of values, it was just a change from private-sector ownership to ownership by the workers. There wasn't a whole big challenge to the value system. The factories ended up competing with each other to a ridiculous degree. I see a similar thing in feminism. ¶ If we don't challenge the unhealthy forms of competitiveness that capitalism breeds, or the way it teaches us to objectify ourselves and each other, then we're just selling ourselves out. Nothing's going to change. In Yugoslavia, they just changed who owned the means of production but they didn't change what was produced or how it was produced or the value system. With feminism it's the same thing. If you don't change the whole value system everywhere, if instead you say, "It's about white middle-class women getting an equal piece of the pie too," then it's boring. ¶ That's the grain of salt to take with my other argument that it is important for women to own businesses. We need to at least try to create new structures and new ways of dealing with things. But it doesn't have to be oppositional. It shouldn't be a choice between running a fucked up corporate business that doesn't

think about what your products do out in the world, how your workers are treated or why all the top management is from a certain group or running a punk business, giving your products away for free and having no structure. That just creates a whole new bogus thing where we're still defining ourselves in accordance to The Man because we're defining ourselves in opposition to him. We are contingent on him staying an asshole.

If you're in opposition to something, then you are in many ways lending it validity.

Totally. You're saying it's important enough to counter. My whole strategy is to say, "I don't even care." I mean, I'm not going to turn a blind eye while people are being murdered, but at the same time I'm not going to base my whole life on being the opposite of a bunch of necrophiliac assholes. I'm going to try to create something that makes sense in the context of what's going on now.

What you're taking about is different than apathy, right?

I'm on this new trip of saying, "I'm an artist, damnit." I think that what I do is important enough that I should get paid for it. I'm not talking about getting paid a hell of a lot. I don't need a house in Malibu or wherever people get houses, but I don't feel bad making a little money off of what I love. I want everybody to be able to do that. ¶ It seems really American to not respect the arts. I've been to Europe and they really respected artists and writers. It was important to them what food tasted like and what buildings looked like. They had squats with really good sound systems. It was so different than the United States. People there cared about food and art and literature. It wasn't a sidebar or a luxury for a certain class of people. It was recognized as an integral part of survival. Here, it's like

you're supposed to feel guilty if you're an artist or a writer. You're supposed to not want to make any money off of it and feel really bad if you do.

You feel like you have to apologize for what you're doing.

Art is a job. It's just not a sucky job. It's important and it's valuable to the community. You should get paid for what you do. I'm really sick of the whole idea that art is this lazy thing that slackers do. I just visited this liberal arts school where a lot of the people there had this really oppositional view of art and activism. You either had to be an artist or an activist, there was no way that those two things could work together.

That's absurd! Art and activism have gone hand in hand for hundreds if not thousands of years. To insist that they're opposite is really denying a lot of history.

There are certain rallies that I want to go to, but I don't necessarily think that it's the place where I want to be political. All I've ever wanted to be since I was little was some kind of artist. I want to be a part of political activism and I want to be a part of the community, but I have to figure out how best to do that. I don't mean that I'm not going to do shitwork for people or for organizations that I believe in, it's just that I haven't found a community or a group that I want to be a part of in that respect. ¶ It's weird that people find art and activism to be a contradiction. It's as if the artist is supposed to be hedonistic and the activist is sacrificial.

Which is ridiculous because you have to sacrifice so much to be an artist, a writer, a musician or whatever.

But why is it an ideal to sacrifice at all? Why isn't it ideal to have a really good time while you're doing things? I think it's a joyous thing to fight back against

oppression. I think it's all about saying "I love life." Sometimes I hate life and it's a big-ass drag but I'm still having an interesting time being here. The whole idea of suffering sounds very Christian to me.

That's because it's a very Christian concept! The idea of suffering being good is absolutely a Christian value. Suffering isn't good, having fun is! [laughs]

Totally! I think life being a drag totally happens—it's got to happen. Life can't be happy and funny all the time like you're in a Carpenters video. But at the same time, suffering isn't cool. Sure you get bummed out and sad sometimes, but I don't understand the suffering part. I especially don't understand why art is wrapped up in the idea of suffering. Who thought of that? [laughs] Obviously it was thought up by someone who has never had to suffer. I don't want to always make art about that and I don't want to stay in some sort of debilitating situation so that I can feel like I'm making "authentic" art. Why can't we make art that's really strategic, smart, joyous and satisfying?

That can be applied directly to political actions as well.

In what way?

Take a group like Queer Nation. Back when they were really active, they brought a lot of fun to what they were doing. There were groups in the gay and lesbian community as well as in the overarching leftist community who disliked them because of that. They felt like it was an illegitimate form of political protest to be funny or to have fun with what you were doing. It had to be very serious. It's this same concept where fun isn't legitimate when it comes to something "important" like political speech.

It doesn't work like that. There's funniness

inside of seriousness and seriousness inside of funniness. I'm being really ying-yang now [laughs] but it's true!

It is true. I can remember being really upset with people who were saying what Queer Nation was doing was illegitimate. They were bringing in people that wouldn't normally be at a protest because they made it fun. Isn't it more important that bodies are in the streets protesting than how they're protesting? And people wouldn't agree. They'd rather have fewer people protesting in the "correct" way. That goes back to when we were talking about people being diametrically opposed to the system are just reinforcing the system. These leftists were just reinforcing the system they were supposedly protesting against by making rules about what kind of speech would be allowed.

Why are we allowing capitalist thought to define everything? Why does that get to decide how everything goes down? And why is it about being legitimate in the eyes of the people who own the majority of the wealth? Why do they get to decide these things? It's like everybody's still trying to be accepted in the eyes of their fathers. ¶ We're all fighting for the crumbs on The Man's table and people always get pitted in opposition to each other. You see it all the time. We need to realize that while we're all squabbling, shit is going down. The US government is going to all these other countries and fucking over people's governments and people's lives and jobs and stealing natural resources. Sure, we need to argue and we need to squabble to a certain extent in order to be critical, but if we keep basing everything on who's being hypocritical, that's the logic of The Man. It's just like creating boundaries around punk. ¶ People are always like, "That person's not punk" or

"That band used to be *my* band and then all these dumb jocks got into them." I used to be one of those kids—I wasn't a jock or a cheerleader, but I wasn't a punk. We all come from somewhere. I'm not saying there should be more jocks and assholes at shows, I'm just saying that erecting these borders is fucked. Why can't it be about inclusion? Why does it have to be about another border?

It's a denial of your own history.

People aren't born listening to Born Against or Bikini Kill. Everyone comes from somewhere else. To claim something as your own and not let someone who may not have the record collection that you do enjoy it and take something away from it is denying your own experience.

I went on the Internet one day and I looked at these Riot Girl message boards and there was all this stuff about how "You can't be a real Riot Girl if you dress like that or your hair looks like this." It was so pathetic. Girls write me letters and say, "Riot Girl at my school is only about what kind of shirt you wear." I'd just like to think that maybe it's about that for the first two weeks. I think most women are really interested in the history of what other women have done. Once I found out about it, I was ferociously eating it—"Yum! I can't believe I've been kept from this my whole life." Sure, the outward expression may be fashion, which is perfectly legitimate, but underneath there is a lot of interest in what women historically have done to fight oppression.

This weekend a friend of mine lent me some zines from her zine archive, including a copy of *Bikini Kill* zine number two. On the cover of that issue it says "Girl Power." Later in the weekend it was my roommate's birthday and she wanted to go buy costume jewelry so we went to the mall and Claire's Boutique was filled with

In my earlier days, I think I was doing things that were oppositional to history. I was drawing a caricature of old-school feminists. Even though I paid bullshit lip service to the feminism of the past, I don't think I knew my history like I do now.



things emblazoned with the words "girl power." I had this really strange feeling because I had just seen the cover of *BK#2* and then saw all this stuff and I knew that this stuff had grown indirectly out of that. All I could keep thinking was how if this was weird to me, it must be *unbelievably* weird to you.

I remember when I first saw that stuff, I was really freaked out! [laughs]

How strange is it to maybe not have coined a term, but to have used it in one way and then eight years later turn on *Spice World* and see it stretched across Ginger Spice's breasts?

I wish I could have afforded that dress back in '91! It's really creepy to me. It seems like whenever anything has a chance to become radical in pop culture, they just get The Monkees to do it.

They'll have auditions and get girls that won't say anything beyond "Girl Power!"

¶ I know when I first started, I said things like, "It's really great to be beautiful and powerful and sexy," and I take a little bit of that back now. What I was saying was that you don't have to look a certain way or have a certain hairstyle to be a feminist; that just because a girl wears lipstick that that doesn't mean she's not a feminist. But now I realize that I wasn't really challenging the standards of beauty. A friend said to me, "Why is it so subversive to be beautiful in the traditional sense? I think it's much more subversive to create your own form of beauty and to set your own standards." She's right. I wasn't thinking about what I was saying. ¶ The things that I was saying back then were very easily co-optable by capitalism and the mainstream media. They're very easily interpreted to mean, "it's feminist to be really sexy for men." That's not what I meant at all! There are a lot of times

when people think that in order to create something, you have to destroy something and sometimes you do.

Sometimes things have to be completely destroyed in order to change. But I don't think that in order to create a new happening or movement, people have to destroy what happened in the past. We need to build on the foundations that these past movements have provided. In my earlier days, I think I was doing things that were oppositional to history. I was drawing a caricature of old-school feminists. Even though I paid bullshit lip service to the feminism of the past, I don't think I knew my history like I do now.

¶ I see it happening even now with younger women saying weird stuff to me that sets it up that I'm old school and they're new school. Now that it's happening to me, of course, I can realize how I've done that to other people and look back in my wise old age of 29 and be glad that I'm not like that anymore. I think that old school and new school have a lot to offer each other—not that I consider myself old school at this point anyway—I'm only 29! ¶ The thing that could be possibly good or beneficial from the Spice Girls is that really little kids may be able to overlook the bullshit and get inspired by them. My friend Tammy's niece Crystal is staying with us right now and she loves the Spice Girls. She's this really amazing person and totally has her own thing going on and I think she's smart enough to make it into something that works for her instead of something she's working for. This other girl I know, Zoe, loves the Spice Girls too and she does these performances and dances based on them. I think she can turn it into something powerful. It can be cool if little girls are turning it into something that works for them or if people hear "girl power" and they want to know more about it, so they go to the

library instead of going to the mall. ¶

What really is girl power? It's when Angela Davis was put in prison and people went there and sang to her outside the window. It's these different moments when women really did seriously challenge the structure of society. That's girl power! My problem comes when it's just about barrettes and T-shirts.

There's a song on the Julie Ruin record, "Crochet" that reminds me a lot about what we're talking about. In it, you talk about the consumption of Riot Girl into the mainstream and how that "killed the thing." But you sum it all up by playfully saying that all of it just makes you want to crochet. It's a curious way to end it and I was wondering what you meant by that?

There are certain moments when you feel really alive. You're really in love with your friends; you're really in love with your friends' bands; and you're really in love with your own band. All these things are going on that are really great and really in the moment. When that becomes just a sentence in someone else's essay, you can feel really dehumanized. There's a total language deterioration breakdown. I've told the beginning of Riot Girl story 3,000 times now—if I have to say that ever again, I'm going to die! Some of that song had to do with that feeling. ¶ I have this index planner of all these different meals from the '70s. It has meals like the "Hobo Hike" and all these other crazy meals that take eight hours to prepare. When I look at it, I just think that this is a way to keep women off the street; this is a way to keep women from rioting; this is a way to have women doing boring busy work. They spend all this time preparing this meal that probably no one is even going to appreciate. I see crocheting fitting into that same thing. My grandmother



If you don't have an analysis of capitalism in your take on feminism and if there is no analysis of race or class in what you're doing, then it seems to me that your feminism can just become about moving up the corporate ladder.

did crafts—she made little figurines and stuff for people's front yards and ceramics and everything. I remember asking her if she considered herself an artist or if she ever wanted to have a show, and she said that it "wasn't feminine." It started me thinking about how keeping women busy with these crafts or cooking these huge meals is a lot like today where we're keeping women busy consuming other women's work in a way that isn't inspiring them to do their own work. ¶ Saying, "Oh man, fucking Kathleen Hanna put out this new Julie Ruin record and it totally sucks. I'm going to do something 10 times better," is engagement. It's awesome. It's the best thing that could happen. But if instead someone thinks, "Oh, the girl from Bikini Kill did this thing, let's make stickers of her and put them on our notebooks," it's just empty consumption. I'm not saying that putting stickers of another woman on your notebook is fucked—especially if it reminds you that you're connected to a larger community—I'm just saying that the empty consumption of it as if it's another product is fucked. ¶ The other element in that song is that I'm saying that you make *me* want to crochet. It's about feeling so frustrated by things—by the outside world or by certain situations in my life—that all I wanted to do was busy work. All of a sudden I started going, "Oh my god, is all of this shit pushing me into the world where I'm going to be making Hobo Hikes off of little cards?" There was a point where I could have gone either way. But once again, having an analysis that had to do with oppression saved my life. If there wasn't feminist theory, I don't know what I would have done. This feeling of being pushed into invisibility is a product of oppression. It is a historical problem that women, and a lot of marginalized people, have had to deal with. I think that now,

invisibility is disguised by a kind of fake visibility. Visibility that has to do with *Tank Girl*. Is that really visibility? I don't feel made visible by that.

That has me thinking about something like the Lilith Fair that very much seems to encapsulate what you're talking about. It does have some subversive qualities to it, I guess, but it's very much just about consumption without a lot of question or inspiration.

All I think about when I think about the Lilith Fair is this image of all these girls' Bioré strips on. [laughs] The Bioré company used the Lilith Fair as a test market and they gave out free Bioré strips at this one stop on the Lilith Fair. I think that's totally interesting. All these girls at the Lilith Fair had Biorés on—they were group Bioré bonding! There's that whole thing about popping blackheads and how turning the light on really bright and getting in there and poking at your skin and squeezing stuff out of it is such a good thing for your self-esteem. As women we're supposed to wear that makeup that makes us look like we're all one piece, like we don't have pores and make ourselves totally clean and have no dirt in our skin. That's all I think of when I think of the Lilith Fair. ¶ In terms of visibility, there was a really big push over the past 10 years for marginalized people to be really visible in the media. You see it in a lot of early feminist literature criticism—"Here is this book and there aren't very many women in it and the only women characters that are in it are like this." It's called "representational critique" or something like that. It's this whole school of thinking in terms of representation. You look at *Basic Instinct* and you see what fucked up representations of women—and of women who sleep with other women—that movie

has and you go, "OK, we need to create a woman that is not a bad representation." The result is boring things that are trying to show a woman that is feisty and smart and a positive representation and it just doesn't work.

It's a women designed by committee.

Yeah, and that's insulting! That's what I call fake visibility. Do we now try to create positive images, or do we deal with what's really here. What kind of art are we going to make now?

What is your answer to that question?

I want to make art that's really smart; art that references feminist art from previous times and feminist art that's going on right now. I want to make feminist music. That's all I'm really interested in. I think there's such an open space to do that in right now. You've got bands like The Need and Free Kitten who are doing a whole new thing and I want to be a part of that. All I know is that I don't want to make something that is totally one-dimensional—that is just about "girls rule!" I don't care about that. That doesn't mean that I'm not a feminist, it just means I'm not a boring feminist. [laughs] I don't want to make stuff that treats people like idiots, because that's part of the problem. If you don't have an analysis of capitalism in your take on feminism and if there is no analysis of race or class in what you're doing, then it seems to me that your feminism can just become about moving up the corporate ladder. Which doesn't mean that I think women should starve to death or never make any money or never have any fun. It just means that I'm not interested in a feminism that's about gaining access to the same stupid shit that other jerks have access to. ©

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"I think it's funny now that in the last three or four years grindcore and fast hardcore have gotten totally popular. I can't wait for it to become unpopular again."

Assück, long time hardcore mainstays in the more abrasive subgenre of the music, play a brand of music equal parts speed, aggression and even more speed. Hailing from Tampa Florida, death metal capital of the United States, that might not come as a surprise to some, if you're only talking about speed and aggression. The difference, other than Assück lacking any upside-down crucifixes branded into their foreheads, is that Assück communicate a message a million times more grounded in punk rock ethics and beliefs than they do about hailing the dark overlord or embracing the sacrificial chalice or some such something. Steve Heritage, guitarist, cookie monster impersonator, and absolute nice guy sat down with me outside the Fireside Bowl to talk flower violence.

Interview by Josh Hooten

My parents live in Tampa so I spend a little bit of time there each year. A few years back I was down there and went to go see you guys with Hot Water Music and the word on the street was that there might be a lot of violence in retaliation for some racist skinhead getting stabbed at a Snapcase show the week before. How is it down there now?

Come on, you're going to ask me about the Snapcase incident? That was in '94. July 14th 1994; I have the flyer on my wall at home. There's not a crossover between the scene that we're involved in and the Snapcase scene. There's a place in St. Petersburg, Florida called the State Theater which is like 600 or 700 capacity which sells out for shows like that. Avail, Snapcase, Earth Crisis, Less Than Jake, stuff like that. That's not really the scene we're involved in. At that time there was a club called the Stone Lounge in Tampa that was kind of picking up that kind of crowd because they were doing some Victory bands and there was a really bad scene at a Snapcase/Donuts show. Our show was pretty much the next hardcore show after that so the threats were about whatever show was going on. But it was all threats, there was nobody there. No bruisers showed up because there isn't really much of a crossover between those scenes. You know how the hardcore grapevine works, it's pretty relentless.

The thing that struck me as weird was because I had seen Samuel not long before and there was an anti-racist skinhead contingent standing around out front of the Blue Chair watching out for the bad guys. I thought to myself, "This is a Samuel show!!!" It made me think weird things about Florida.

The Blue Chair was the coolest place ever. I've always thought Blue Chair Music in Tampa was one of the coolest things that ever happened to Florida. What Edwin and Tom did with that shop for Tampa is limitless.

I'd always stop by there numerous times when I was down there. It seemed like kind of an anomaly in that town. But going back to the Samuel show, I thought how odd it was to have these skins there watching out for all of us. I'm curious what's up with that area these days.

That was a long time ago. Things have changed a lot. The music scene in general has changed so much in the last three or four years. Before, there were probably some kids who were into Snapcase but also into Inept or something like that. Now there's not that crossover, in my opinion. It's just kind of polarized.

I'm guessing that's a pretty widespread atmosphere in a lot of places. Like tonight I don't know a single person in the club. But a few weeks ago I came here and saw

Compound Red with Braid and everyone I know in all of Chicago was pretty much there. It's strange to me because I've always been interested in a wide range of musical styles but so many people just aren't. They're into one thing and that's it.

As for Tampa, I think all the same kids would show up at those two shows but there is definitely a dichotomy when it comes to like Lookout! bands or Victory bands.

Since the newer version of Assück, losing members, becoming a three piece instead of four, and moving over to full-time singing duties, would you say the focus or approach of the band has changed at all? It doesn't seem like it listening to the two records.

It doesn't have as much to do with losing members as it does with us growing up and being older and seeing things from a different vantage point. At this point we've been a band for a *really* long time. How we approach our band as far as ethically and what we do is more of a growing thing.

How old were you when Assück started?

It was what was supposed to be my junior year in high school, so it was November of 1987 when we started playing music together.

In the course of a generic life, the time between the ages of 17 to 27, is probably—outside of cognitive development and when the soft spot on your head closes up [laughs]—are the most formative years of one's life. Everybody who is in a band now was probably in a band when they were a junior in high school that they are probably embarrassed to talk about now. Their tastes have changed and their style has changed and they have completely changed. They won't allow themselves to be referred to as "ex-members of blah-blah." But you've been doing the same thing for all that time. To what do you attribute that longevity?

Maybe we just lucked out. When we started out we decided we wanted to have a fast band and maybe it's now just all come back into fruition. It's come full circle. I think it's funny now that in the last three or four years grindcore and fast hardcore have gotten totally popular. I can't wait for it to become unpopular again. When we would play before, people wouldn't get it at all. [laughs]

Lyrically and imagery-wise Assück seem to have a darker take on the human experience. Why are you so angry?

I don't think I'm an angry person. As opposed to what I have been in the past I'm very well balanced at this point.

Does that mean the band has worked as therapy over the years?

Maybe it has. To me the kind of music we've always played has always been angry music. I

think we figured out how to do it correctly and we're going to stick to it. We do what we do because that's what we do, not because we approach it that way. It's not contrived or formulated in anyway, we do it because that's how we are. We don't have a plot to see how we can get more pissed off. [laughs]

You don't sit around in the van and make yourself angry before the show? [laughs]

No.

Tell me about the ruckus you guys caused at the More Than Music fest a couple of weeks back. You refused to play on the stage or in the venue?

We showed up at the fest and it was pretty cool—actually, it was really cool. We don't really like festivals that much but there were a lot of bands and a lot of kids we knew. It was almost like a class reunion thing or something. It was a huge marketplace of punk rock; it was really great. But what really sucked was that they rented this big club that had this towering stage. I remember watching The Strike from the side and walking up to the stage and my chin was at the height of the stage—it was huge. It wasn't like a Fireside stage or a thousand other stages we've played on. Dio and Iron Maiden wanted to rent the place that night. They were going to bump the fest so they could rent it to Dio and Iron Maiden because they were offering more money or something, I don't know the details of that, but that's the scope of the place that we're talking about. We decided to set up on the floor. We know people have played on the floor before at the fest, but the club and the kids who were setting it up were not OK with that at all. There was no leeway in that regard and we said if we had to get up on Maiden's stage then we just wouldn't play. They said, "OK, then you just won't play." So we found a house to play at. We played like three blocks down and two blocks over and it was one of the best shows we've ever played. There were a few hundred kids, a big circle pit going out into the street, kids on top of the roof of the house—it was really great. I'm really happy it turned out the way it did. It was a much better vibe in the front yard than after 400 bands had played in this theater on this huge stage. It didn't have so much to do with the size of the club as it did with the height of the stage and the light show and the asshole PA man—all the stuff that comes with a stage that high.

Tell me about Kids' Key.

Kids' Key is a dream that began with me and our old bass player Steve when we were driving

through Montana and we saw a big plateau. We decided we wanted to buy that plateau—how much could a plateau cost, anyway?—and build a city called Punk Rock USA on top of it and every band in the world would go to Punk Rock USA. Just all these punk kids living on this plateau in the middle of nowhere. It would just be great. That changed to Kids' Key because the Florida Keys are a lot more desirable place to live than Montana. It's a good idea, but we're not the first to think of it.

What do you do other than play in Assück? I know you record bands at Morrisound Studios. What else do you do? What do you do that might surprise people? Do you knit? Do you raise bunnies?

Pretty much my entire life is consumed by music. I help run a record store with some kids, I record music for money, and I play in a band. I love to play guitar even when it's not in my band. I like to look at equipment. There's not one aspect of my life that's not somehow based on music. I like gardening, but I don't think that would surprise anybody—a lot of vegetarian kids and kids that are into the Food Not Bombs thing are into the whole gardening thing. I'm not militant about the whole organic, buy the right beetles to kill the other bugs thing. I'm not like that.

So you're not a militant gardener?

No, I'm not a militant gardener at all. [laughs] I can't wait to get back home and build a big flowerbed in my backyard. I just moved a couple of months ago and I toodled with it at my old place, but now I'm ready to go full-fledged.

I should hook you up with my father. He's got this huge bucket garden.

The bucket garden! We're totally going on about nothing to do with the interview! This is great!

What do you mean? I just got my title quote for the article, "I can't wait to get back home and build a big flower garden!"

It's a vegetable garden. I'm building a flowerbed.

Oh, I see, a flower garden would be too soft, huh?

That wouldn't be grindcore—or power violence or whatever else it's called—would it? Flower violence? [laughs] The best thing about growing vegetables is that the only person who really appreciates it is you. Like you grew it and you can eat it! It's awesome. @

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sonal need to express oneself in that manner. For those bands

or individuals, it's then bringing part of themselves into it.

"The bottom line is if you're going to create social change and

taking it that next step that most people won't take—stepping

you write down your checklist of what to do, the top thing on

up and saying, "this is what I have to say." Most people are

that list is not "grab a guitar and put out a record," you know?

afraid to make that step. "

But I think with punk rock, or any type of music or art, when

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Ken Sanderson, Prank kingpin, old school Mordam employee, and man of vast knowledge stopped by the Punk Planet mansion on a recent trip to Chicago and talked the talk with Sinkers and Hooten. Putting out some of the more abrasive and aggressive records of the day, Ken has a unique viewpoint on one of the only subgenres of punk left that hasn't found some type of mass appeal. In a scene that these days seems to be producing more and more prefabricated music that's ready for the radio, Ken trudges onwards putting out records that blatantly defy that trend by bands like His Hero Is Gone, Dead and Gone and others.

Dan: What lead you to read the David Lee Roth biography?

It's totally hilarious. Think about it, someone with that much ego... Any rational person at a certain point would go, "Wait a minute, this is really stupid. I'm in front of 40 million people in assless chaps swinging around on a rope."

Josh: Maybe it makes more sense in the context of having been pushed that far. Maybe it built up to that. I don't imagine he walked out on stage at Van Halen's first show like that.

Well, with enough positive reinforcement...

Dan: I don't know, something tells me David Lee Roth emerged fully formed—he came out of the womb with fringe.

What he's selling is that character, and keeping up with that character and all his crazy stunts. I'm interested in people with that much ego. It's been my conclusion so far that stupid people get famous.

Josh: Or maybe it's smart people who figure out how to live in a dumb world and find the best ways to exploit it.

So anyway, what was your question?

Josh: The question was about how the bands you're putting out are playing this loud, fast and noisy style but also have a pretty clear political slant to their lyrics. However, the way they're presenting their ideas is so abrasive and so inaccessible to a lot of people that the message may be lost. For instance, would His Hero Is Gone be just as popular if they were singing about bowling or cat food or whatever? They could be singing about anything because unless you sit down and really read and pay attention to the lyrics to find out what the songs are about, you'll never know.

I do think a lot of their appeal is that they have a really solid lyrical base and that extends the people who are interested in them. I do think there are bands on my label that are just pissed off, angry bands. Like the L Dopa record I put out—it's just an angry record. Wurzel is more about music and anger. Those bands don't have a broad base of appeal because lyrically they don't represent that. I always feel weird in a way because I would like to throw most of my support to bands that have some sort of

lyrical grounding and do have a strong set of ideas. A band like Damad has a really spiritual agenda to their lyrics—their lyrics are about balance and nature and things like that. But I think a lot of their appeal is because they're about something. ¶ It enters into that weird area of punk rock where there are a lot of people who are looking for something to believe in. I think what they have to say and offer is pretty solid stuff. Take straight edge hardcore: A lot of it is based on the agenda behind the music as much as the music itself. A lot of that stuff is popular because it fits in with a set of ideas that people want to believe in. ¶ It's unfortunate in a way that a lot the reasons and anger that attracted me to punk rock are feelings that I still have and things I'm still angry about. They are things that haven't changed. I still get bombarded with tons of useless information and ads everyday and it's still really frustrating that I have to put up with so much disposable society.

Josh: To me it seems like there's probably a better way for bands to get their message across to more people. But a part of me is glad that they don't because then I wouldn't have the music to enjoy.

The bottom line is, if you're going to create social change and you write down your checklist of what to do, the top thing on that list is not "grab a guitar and put out a record," you know? But I think with punk rock, or any type of music or art, when you can express those kinds of feelings it's more about the personal need to express oneself in that manner. For those bands or individuals, it's then bringing part of themselves into it, taking it that next step that most people won't take—stepping up and saying, "this is what I have to say." Most people are afraid to make that step. That goes back to what we were saying about people being stupid and how you have to make that move and jump out in front of a hundred people and go, "This is what I think," and take the chance that all hundred people are going to think you're full of shit and throw a trash can at you. ¶ I think good art or music is when someone can take his or her own personal twist and interpretation of their feelings and put it out there so people can relate back to it. I don't think when you're having a moment of artistic inspiration or whatever that you can really calculate things that much. In the case of His Hero Is Gone, they do do a lot of things that go beyond just being in a band and singing about politics. I think there are a lot of bands out there that do other things as well. ¶ One thing I have to admit is that I'm kind of a rocker—I'm totally a rocker. There are tons of bands with great things to say, but I like bands that play music that I like. When you think about punk rock, what is it that brings people together? It's the music. If the music isn't good, I generally find my interest falls off—hand me a book, you know? That's something that not everyone I work with would be thrilled to hear but that is one of the things that draws me to bands. This scene wouldn't exist without the glue of music. ¶ The interesting thing about the later part of the '80s and '90s is how people have taken

what developed through the rock scene and taken it in different directions. In a lot of ways, the music stagnated. There's not as much breakthrough stuff going on and the breakthrough stuff that is happening is people traveling around the US in boxcars seven years ago or people making their own movies or comic books or whatever.

Dan: I think especially in the mid-to-late '90s the real breakthroughs were happening with individual bands as opposed to movements of bands. Like in the early to mid-'80s you'd get four or five bands from the same area that would all emerge at the same time and it would be this new thing. But now individual bands, like Sleater-Kinney for example, emerge and they sound totally different, but there's no movement happening along with them.

Josh: There isn't that much breakthrough stuff going on. There isn't that much that's really intriguing. I think that everything is so large right now. There were certain bands that established certain aesthetics, and then everybody who was a fan of those bands started bands to emulate them. So now a lot of things are very easily definable. Most things fit neatly into one of the pre-established categories.

I think one of the downsides of everyone figuring out the DIY thing is that now everyone can put out a 7". That's something that people worked really hard to achieve and now the fact is that you have a treadmill of things being churned out with no new ideas thrown into it. It's like little badges you get in the Boy Scouts. You get a little fanzine badge and then you get a record badge or a booking a show badge. It's cool that people are active and do things, but there's no point to it if you don't think through the ideas behind it. If you're just doing it just to keep yourself busy, go collect stamps.

Dan: At one point it was a very novel concept to do something just to do it yourself, but...

I think the real challenge is to come up with your own unique ideas and not have the fear to step out from the other hundred or so DIY 7"s and say something different or do something or be someone different. Yeah all your friends might not like it and might not buy it, but you have to try something new. ¶ I've often thought you could set a definable number of people that make this entire punk scene happen and it's probably around 2,000 people world wide. Everybody else just takes it in. If you put everybody who makes things happen in the scene together, it wouldn't even be enough to populate a town. It's really not that many people. The biggest selling records I've put out have sold under 10,000 copies—that's nothing! But then I'll talk to people and they'll think my label is huge. It's not huge. They think just because everyone they know has the record that it's huge. How many people do you know? 300? It's really not that big of a thing and that's a real weird thing. ¶ It does come to a point where you have to

consider why you're doing this. That's why I spend a lot of time on the phone with the bands. If I'm thinking about working with them, I spend a lot of time getting to know them as people. No one, when you're selling that few records, is making a livable wage. It's more that you're doing it for the art or for the enjoyment of it. I think it's important to keep it on a level of communication and trust, otherwise you're really left with nothing. ¶ I was really excited watching the VH1 special on Milli Vanilli because when they came back as Rob and Fab and they actually sang the songs themselves and tried to make a comeback, that record only sold 2,000 copies. So when people call up and ask how many records I've sold, I can tell them it's more than Milli Vanilli! [laughs] But seriously, even if you think about how many copies sell of *Punk Planet* or *MRR*, I'm sure most free weekly papers in almost every city give away more copies a week than that. It's not that big of a thing. But I do think it's interesting how these small things carry over into bigger movements or activist things. Like I'm not going to say something stupid like "There are more vegetarians in the world today because of punk rock," but those things invariably do have some point of influence in the larger culture.

Josh: I think Food Not Bombs is a pretty good example of that. There's so many punk kids that get into that particular cause. Unfortunately it sort of becomes another badge for them to put on their punk uniform sometimes but at least it's a good cause. It seems like if you're a punk kid and want to become politically active, Food Not Bombs is sort of the entry level, or the most accessible activity for people. That's great because it helps a lot of people.

The only deficiency I see is that a lot of times there is a lack of real politics. Like war or homelessness are really black and white issues. It's easy to oppose those kinds of things, but it's real hard to come up with your own unique perspective or twist to it. But I'm at a point where I'm almost 30 and with all the different records I've listened to and things I've read and experiences I've had throughout my life, to look at someone who is 10 years younger than me and is starting their first band, it's hard to find inspiration in that. I don't mean to belittle what they've been through to get to that point, and I've always been really unsuccessful, personally, at voicing those viewpoints but some new band's 7" is not always a place I can look for inspiration. It's like, "Well yeah, duh, war is bad."

Josh: For me, it seems like the older I get the less stuff inspires me the way it used to. My all-time favorite records list hasn't changed in a while. There's a lot of stuff coming out that I really like and a lot of stuff that I think is important that's come out in the last few years but not that much grabs me like things used to grab me. I think that's more a reflection of me getting older than it is of the music.

Once you get older it's really easy to pass stuff off and say, "Well this just sounds like Negative Approach and I'd rather just go back and listen to them." The hard thing about it is that there's always people growing up and entering into the scene and these current bands are bands that will introduce these ideas to for the first time. You can't discount that and you can't discount that they may draw their personal connection to

music and personal ideas and opinions about music based on things that are new right now. ¶ I came to a pretty weird revelation the other day. I'm almost 30 and the things that I'm really into on a personal entertainment level are comic books and records. Comic books are a dying art form—no kids are into comic books right now. Why would you be when you can plug into a computer and actually be the person in the comic book? Vinyl records are also a dying art form and I think that's partially because they're more expensive to make than CDs and there's just too many of them. My tastes in things have sort of become dated. It's a strange feeling to realize.

Dan: I think that's true to anything that caters to a collector's market. Like stamp collecting—how many people that are our age do we know who are into that? Anything that becomes enclosed in the realm of collectors, how do you attract new blood into that? It's the same with toys—how many 6-year-olds want six different variants of *Spawn*? But I want all of them.

Josh: I think things start catering to a collector's market sometimes because they become a dying art form. I know people have been collecting records forever but it never seemed like such a rabid and widespread hobby until CDs became so readily available. Since vinyl wasn't really threatened, it wasn't something you needed to avidly collect because that's what there was out there. But when something gets pushed into a corner, I think people become more interested in getting it.

I think people need to face up the fact that vinyl costs more to make. I really wish independent labels would even out their CD and vinyl price. They keep their vinyl at this artificial low price and rationalize it by thinking they'll make their money back off of CDs, which most people do. Even it out. That means everyone will have to accept that the days of \$5 and \$6 LPs are over. LPs would become \$8. But CDs could be \$8 too. People don't think about paying \$11 for a CD, they just think that's what a CD costs. I really think people should even it out. ¶ I don't think it's vinyl that's dying so much as 7"s. If you're like me, you've got 14 boxes of 7"s and it's like, you're busy, you've got work to do, you don't have time to go through those boxes and listen to those records. I won't even buy 7"s unless a couple of people tell me it's good. Otherwise it would just get filed away. The unfortunate thing with really high intensity music is that most punk bands can only come up with four or six good songs. They can't come up with 18 good songs.

Dan: My 7" collection is probably three times the size of my full-length collection because I've always felt that the 7" was the medium of punk rock. So many bands put out great 7"s but just don't have it for a full-length record.

Then there's the old bands that are living off of what they do put out a record a year that has a good 7" buried in it somewhere. They have four good songs that come out on a full length every year.

Dan: One thing that annoys me is when labels start catering to the collector's market by artificially creating demand by limiting the pressing or making colored vinyl really limited.

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I don't really want people to buy my records because they just happen to be on orange vinyl, I want them to buy the records because they're good. It is a good thing if you give a band colored vinyl records to go on tour with and encourage people to buy the records off the bands while they're on the road. His Hero Is Gone put out a record that was only sold on tour, so it made people go to their shows. That's a good thing. For me personally, I'm down to like 30 records from the '80s that I'm looking for. But if I find these records will they really change the way I feel about punk rock? Probably not. Let's say a record costs me \$75, would I listen to it 75 times so that it only costs me a dollar per listen? There are other people who think differently and they just want to be completists, but I find my collecting habit is more about finding stuff and having fun hunting stuff down. Looking through old stuff in record stores, that's more of the appeal for me.

Josh: The people I've known who are really obsessive about their record collections, if it wasn't records, it'd be something else they were obsessed with. I think there's a type of personality involved.

Dan: I think it definitely does attract a certain crowd.

I had to go to my parent's house about a year ago and get all my stuff because they were moving to Florida. I had to go and ship everything I wanted to keep and get rid of the rest and it was really strange because I would throw out old notebooks or notes I had written but I'd come across some Star Wars thing and I'd think, "Oh this is worth money, I'd better keep it." It's real weird because there is a mix of personal memories and mass cultural memories and also things being worth money. I found a lot of times it was weird to keep these things because I don't really have a connection to it anymore. It's cool and all but personally does it mean anything to me now? No. Will it have any future meaning to me? No. Do I even remember having it as a kid? No, it was just one more toy I had or whatever. But I think that mass cultural memory is what's important to a lot of people. The connection to that time. In a lot of ways I feel like all the stuff I shipped off to California I want to just sell off and make room for future memories and places in my life. Maybe just have one box of stuff from when I was a kid. How long am I going to drag around all these memories?

Josh: They're memories that you don't actually draw upon until you have to lug that box around again.

And the whole thing about it being worth money so you'd better hang on to it is really strange. It gets into the whole idea of how you assign value to things. I come from a family that's really heavy duty Protestant work ethic and it's weird doing this label because I work all the time. I don't go out of my house a lot when I'm not at my job, and I still don't get nearly as much as I need to done. Now think about that Operation Ivy song, "Junkies Running Dry." That song is about people who work all the time. Working non-stop is not what punk rock is about for a lot of people. Punk rock for a lot of people is about working as little as possible and drinking

coffee and sitting around listening to records. It's weird to be a mismatched type A personality thrown into that.

Dan: I think that comes back down to what you were saying before about there being probably 2,000 people that are really doing the work in punk. If you actually did populate a town with those people, there would be no movie theaters and no shows going on because everyone would be working constantly. The "Fuck work man, we're drinking!" attitude has always struck me as false because the people that are really contributing to punk have the best work ethic on the face of the earth and work a million hours!


Doing the kinds of records I do has often mismatched me with attitudes of people towards those kinds of things. One of the bad things about doing a record label is that you have to deal with the business end, and that's a real messy end to deal with. Prank pays for a lot of things that I don't think a lot of other labels do—we pay all the recording, all that kind of stuff. It's hard to be equal business partners with a band if they don't have a stake in that money. I'm a little better now because I have a better understanding of how it works and I can explain to people if they spend an extra \$1,000 recording they may never get paid for the record because it may only sell 1,700 copies. A lot of times the band will come back and say they want their record to sound really good, so they'll spend the money. Things like that. I think as I've learned to do this, I've learned to manage it better.

Dan: On a different note, it always seems like once you get a tight network of people and bands together doing a similar thing—which is definitely at work in the power violence/grind/crust scene that you're a part of—that's the point when the mainstream starts to notice. It happened to pop punk a few years ago, it's happening to emo now. Do you ever see that kind of thing happening to the kind of music you put out?

No, because it's so inaccessible. That's part of the reason I like it, it's just so extreme. No one is ever going to put In/Humanity on the radio; it's just too out there. The only way I can see any of these bands getting really huge would be if they completely jumped to that next level and just became metal bands. I think most of them are so grounded in what they're doing. That's not really their thing. I just don't see that there could be that interest. It's not like anything that I've released has been that new. I try to pick really innovative bands that still somehow take that legacy of what hardcore is and carry it forward. If you're just trying to bring something back than you're limiting yourself to a set of ideas that already happened, and I don't really want to do that. I want to see where we can continue to make music that's fast as hell, and angry and crazy, but goes forward. I don't think hardcore has run out yet, as an idea. ©



PUNK IS A CONSUMER MOVEMENT. IT'S BASED
AMERICAN SOCIETY. IN THAT WAY, YOU CAN'T
THERE'S A LOT OF POTENTIAL TO DISSEMINATE
AND MEET UP WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE IDEAS



Behead The Prophet are a five piece political punk band hailing from Washington State. Featuring former members of Han Shan, Mukilteo Fairies and Brent's TV, Behead play hardcore in the tradition of records such as Born Against's *Nine Patriotic Hymns*. The band emotes a visceral sense of rage mixed with a shot of humor, sincerity and intelligence. After several aborted attempts to try and interview them, I finally got a chance to talk with nearly the entire band, only to find that my tape recorder and my phone line had managed to make the conversation horribly indecipherable. This time I got lucky and got to speak with vocalist Joshua Plague. Interview By **Joel Schalit**

One of the things that I think is so great about Behead The Prophet is that your songs have a literary quality. They're very political and very informed.

I don't dumb it down.

Not in the least.

In the Mukilteo Fairies, sometimes I changed it around so it was easier to understand. But now I write it how it is and it stays that way unless something is really inane.

So the first draft is the last draft?

Every once in a while I'll tinker a few things, but for the most part they're read exactly how I wrote them. Sometimes they'll be written ahead of time and then I have to format it for the song.

In the song "Sacrifice," you talk about the relationship between sacrifice and consumerism. Why you think consumerism is a sacrificial act?

There's a certain homogenization to consumerism. It's a sacrifice of individuality, obviously. People make such a big deal about being an individual in this society, but how many people are actually willing to do that? Consumerism is a perfect place to start. What would set you apart more from people than not purchasing, not buying into it?

What kind of homogeneity are you talking about?

The homogenization of consumer culture. When you're convenience-oriented you're like, "I'm not going to go to the trouble of getting this product because I can't find it, so I'll just get this other thing instead." Once you start relying on that, then anywhere you go you're going to want that product. So the culture homogenizes 'cause people are interested in their own

Punk Sucks Planet

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**BEHEAD THE PROPHET
NO LORD SHALL LIVE**

comfort and security. Which is illusory in this case because it's based on what's available for you to buy. What'll happen is that any local influence in an area is gone. Instead, it's all chains and things that people have become accustomed to having access to. In that way, freedom of choice is actually a threat to the idea of having choices. Choice is such a buzzword, but when it's applied to a capitalist structure, it tends to eliminate it rather than encourage it.

While telling you that you still have the freedom to choose.

Choose, choose, choose. People get a mindset that's very similar to each other then products are actually eliminated from the smorgasbord of choices. Choice is a dangerous little word there.

How do you connect that to punk rock? In "The King of Everything," you extend your critique of consumerism to punk rock culture, particularly in that line "completist discography." Do you think punk culture buys into the same kind of consumerist ideologies, like the rest of American culture does?



People make their own water filters and electrical generators from scratch. I have a roommate who made his own string-making machine. All of that is Do It Yourself. It's not a new idea and it's certainly not confined to punk spheres, even though punks have co-opted the term for themselves a great deal and say they're the only ones doing anything themselves.

Definitely. It's a consumer culture. It's all based on buying stuff like records. Its even more insidious in that people think that buying a record is a form of activism. In a way, that's even worse. Thinking that you have to have these certain records—like the need to own all of a band's albums—has a lot in common with product loyalty. It is still wanting to have a complete line of products that all complement each other. I see that all in there. ¶ Ideas of success and what a band needs to function as a band can also be consumer-oriented also. You go out on tour and you're convinced that you have to have all these products to support yourself. People hem and haw about it at first, but eventually they'll fall in line and accept your shabby merchandise. There's a structure there: You buy new shirts; you screen them with all these products that you've bought; people buy them all. They want all of these different choices that cater to them: their size, their this and their that, what color they want and all this stuff. It's very consumerist as far as products go. ¶ It's even more so with records. Punks make all these demands about how long CDs ought to be for price X. It's really not the point, is it, to sit

there and kow-tow to people's wishes all the time? It's a very capitalist mentality. I find it ironic that people are so into that but it comes off as this egalitarian thing where you're trying to make your records cheap and never mind how many things went into them. You don't even pay attention to how much people might have put into a record or what kinds of sacrifices they have had to make. You just expect all this catering to you, the consumer. I don't really dig on that.

But punk is still a vehicle for you to practice leftist politics. How do you reconcile your critique of punk consumerism with your co-optation of it for political goals?

Punk is a consumer movement. It's based on choice and the same ideas of entrepreneurship that are prevalent in American society. In that way, you can't really separate it from the mainstream culture. But at the same time, there's a lot of potential to disseminate information, there's a lot of potential to have a sort of community and meet up with people who have ideas similar to your own.

You do work in the punk community outside of Behead the Prophet, right?

I've started booking shows. I've been doing most of those in Olympia. I also put out spoken word tapes and zines. I have a lot of zines out. Actually I'm working on a new batch this week. We'll see how it goes.

You tend to change the nature of your zine every time you put one out.

Yeah. There's a series of "Now I's." Issue number four is *Now I Don the Mask of Melancholy*. The last one I put out is *Now I Write a Dictionary*—That's number five and a half. It's a series, and there are seven of them so far. The other zines I do are all different from each other. I've written about thirty of them.

Do you keep all of them in print?

No. [laughs]

Do you do them at home on your computer?

No, I don't have a computer. Usually I hand write them. I'm notorious for hand-written, unstapled zines. I do have one that's all computer art with quotes that I thought were related to the pictures.

That was done on the computer. It was done on an old MacDraw program or something. I drew all these pictures with it. But the writing is all handwritten. When I put that one out people thought I'd lost it for good.

What's the subject of the next zine?

One of them is just sort of gothic Viking writing. It isn't exactly about anything. It's just a bunch of dark pictures and a bunch of Vikings jabbering.

Why Vikings? [laughs]

I don't know. It kinda fit in with the pictures I was drawing; the pictures were Viking-like. I wanted to tell a story, like a quest—something mythological. Each chapter is a page long.

Why write a mythological quest?

My zines are a whole different ballgame than anything else I do. I just get inspired to do stuff, then I'll just start doing it. I don't even think about it at all. I just started writing it and mapping out what I was gonna do. I didn't set out going, "I'm gonna make this next one a Viking quest." It just kinda

came off that way in the outline—I outline them first so I can figure out how long they'll have to be.

Tell me about your spoken word stuff. I have a couple of your cassettes.

I do spoken word with Michael [Griffen, from BHTTP] sometimes playing violin. I've been doing it a lot lately by myself. I have a couple of tapes coming out this month that are just me. I have another one that's me and Jordan [also from BHTTP], playing the drums loudly and proudly. Basically stuff that I write that isn't good for lyrics, I'll lend to spoken word. I'm less picky with the spoken word stuff, but the longer I've been doing it the more I started to discard stuff that isn't that good.

Is there a distinction between the kind of stuff you talk about in your spoken word material and the kind of topics you sing about in the band?

I think there is. The spoken word material deals a lot more with specific communication in particular.

Do you think that it's important for people who play in bands to do other things like put out zines or do spoken word?

They can do what they want. I encourage people to do all of that anyway. There's the whole thing about "jack of all trades, master of none." Don't just force yourself to do that. ¶ For me, there's a really specific reason why I do it: the band is so cathartic, it's almost like instead of going to a psychiatrist or something I have this band. Once I started to notice how therapeutic it was I decided that I was relying on it too much. So I started doing other things that were also outlets because what would happen if I weren't playing? I'd be really freaky. So I decided to have other outlets—I think it was a wise decision.

What do you see that's redeeming in punk that you don't find in other forms of cultural expression?

If you do something in a really grass roots manner, then any kind of art is functional as a political form. I wouldn't dare say that punk is the only form of artistic expression that can be like that. It definitely doesn't do it in the best way it can be done. I like it because there's a lot of shrieking and that's what I feel like doing. And I like the music, so that's an aesthetic choice really. The ethics aren't necessarily exclusive to punk.

That relates to how therapeutic punk is for you.

Yeah, exactly. For me this is the right vehicle. It's cathartic. I work with what's there to try and create an environment for myself and the people around me that's somewhat critical—which is difficult at times. ¶ People make their own water filters and electrical generators from scratch. I have a roommate that made his own string-making machine. All of that is Do It Yourself. It's not a new idea and it's certainly not confined to punk spheres, even though punks have co-opted the term for themselves a great deal and say they're the only ones doing anything themselves. As far as activism goes, I separate political stuff that I do from punk stuff. How much do you really accomplish working solely within that framework? I've been puttering around on that slowly and also doing other activist stuff for a while. It comes in spurts. You get burnt out on it.

But you've got to do activist work in tandem with your artistic work in order to make your artistic politics valid.

It's kind of three-pronged. You dwell within this punk world and do what you can. Then you have other things outside of it. To a certain extent, you bridge the two together. It's almost like doing three separate things at once. I think a lot of people do that who are activists and consider themselves involved in punk and hardcore.

What kind of activist work are you doing right now?

My big plan is to have an educational group; a Lyceum that has a forum where we select a topic, mail packets to a mailing list and make them available to the general public after we've done research. We'd invite speakers to come from different sides of an issue and they would give their case. You would basically sit and listen to people give a presentation on an issue. You'd get background information on an issue. You'd have a panel discussion. You could break down into smaller groups, workshop style, and also have formal debates between however many sides there might be on a topic. That's my big plan: A free forum for the general public that's well advertised, where most people would feel welcome, that's as close to being objective as possible in order to allow people to educate themselves and give them a proactive tool to look at issues critically that they might be interested in.

Are there any kind of issues you want to deal with in particular that are big concerns of yours?

I've already picked out the first one: Chemical Sensitivity. I have some issues with that myself, but I'm not sure how much of it is mental and how much of it is reality. I'm interested in learning more about it and talking to other people who suffer from it and maybe people who are skeptical about it. That's a good one to start out with.

What exactly do you mean by "chemical sensitivity?"

Everyday products that you use that make a person sick. People have allergies. Nobody disputes that. What happens allegedly is that somebody is allergic to one thing and then their mind gets carried away. All of the sudden they're wearing a gas mask outside because they can't be around moving vehicles or whatever. It descends into mayhem if you let yourself go. But then again, how much of that is real? Like exposure to a chemical like chlorine—if you have a really bad experience with it such as if it gets dumped on you, then your body chemistry changes. All of a sudden, you're sensitive to all other types of chemicals that you'd never been sensitive to before. ¶ I know there's a woman who lives in Montana who eventually cocooned herself into a trailer and now she has sound-induced seizures. Nobody is even allowed to speak when they come visit her. It's very extreme. It's an interesting reaction to the ways in which all of the modern conveniences and what is supposedly humanity controlling its environment. It's out of control and something that they can't do anything about. I'm curious about how much of it is psychological. Do you remove yourself from society in this way by saying, "Because I can't control what I'm exposed to, I will remove-

myself from society altogether?" I think people still think their lives are dictated by outside forces and they don't have any say over it.

That's something you definitely deal with in your songwriting. In "Separated States" you talk about people who cop a victim mentality. It seems to me that part of what you're getting at is that many people on the so-called left fetishize having a victim's status.

Being an eternal victim or being in an eternal state of recovery doesn't accomplish very much. Maybe it's fun for people to be able identify that way. I find it rather scandalous that it's allowed. First of all, I'd ask what kind of example does it set for someone to say that "This thing happened and I'll forever be recovering from it and continuously talking about it." If you've been victimized, you have a responsibility to yourself to deal with that in whatever way you think best. Maybe I'm being critical of something that people maybe can't help—I don't know.

It's important to be critical of that kind of mentality because I think a lot of people turn themselves into permanent victims in order to prevent themselves from ever being able to overcome their own individual traumas.

That's terrible. I just don't get it. You have to get past stuff. How are you going to be happy if you don't do that? Not that being happy is possible anyway. There's something to be said for getting past things. If you have a repressed memory, bring it out. Figure it out the best way that you can. Deal with it in some way. ¶ Using bad experiences as a way of making people pussyfoot around you and writing about it in your zine is no excuse to turn it into a lifestyle. Once you allow yourself to slip into a victim's mentality, everything that happens to you is victimization. Once you start to refer to just about anything as victimization, it removes the seriousness. People eventually stop listening, and you've managed to ruin that outlet of discussion for everyone by taking away any validity that the idea of being a victim has. ¶ In "Separated States," there's a point about how once you deal with an abuse history, you're just going to dwell on it because that's the example that's been set for you by people that have politicized those issues. They're continually dwelling in a victimized state—it's like wallowing in shit. Don't you ever want to pull yourself out? I don't want to sound like Camille Paglia here; people have legitimate issues to deal with. I don't think you can just ignore things. But getting passed things is not just a cliché. Your experiences will always be a part of you. However you can't continuously live in a victimized state. It's like any background you have. You're not that background eternally. ©

Are you tired of seeing bands night after night, week after week who are nothing more than cookie-cutter replications of bands who broke up years ago? Tired of watching kids jock '88 style hardcore like it's never been done? Tired of watching bands assimilate into the sound that is currently popular under the guise of progress? Bands that are easily described in with phrases like "It's like Fugazi meets Drive like Jehu"? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, here is my simple solution for you: Crom Tech. Crom Tech are a two peice from DC, but they are a far cry from anything you could infer from either "two peice" or "DC." Guitarist/singer Mick plays like his hands are on fire and sings in a language of his own invention, while drummer Malcolm borrows liberally from jazz timing but infuses it with fury and speed. Avante fantasy metal? Possibly. Cacophony of speed jazz? Maybe. Challenging the boundaries of punk? Definitely.

Interview with Mick by **Jessica Hopper**

Would you quit your band to be in Slayer?

No, Slayer is just too macho—even though they are great.

You wanna make metal more feminine? What sort of qualities do you look for in metal?

Not more feminine, per se. The qualities I look for? Hmm... evil. Evil is a good one. Evil is fun.

What sort of level of evil? Like killing people evil?

Let me think... Evil is good quality, as long as it's not too literal.

Like those bands in Norway that wanna bring back the Dark Ages and burn down churches—too literal?

Yeah. But for shock value, it's a great idea.

Whats the biggest thing Crom Tech would burn down on the basis of a good, shocking, evil idea?

I don't think we'd burn something; we'd build something. This is a recent development in my life: I'm getting more peaceful; more into creating rather than breaking things down.

What do you create?

I made a little man out of meral. I like making little men. I'm trying to write a mythology. Thus far I'm getting it worked out in my head.

When you play live, what are looking to get out of it?

Not really anything anymore.

What happened?

It used to be satisfying—this transcendental feeling of being taken away from it all. It was a release. But now... Now, it's just making me tired. All this touring and show playing stuff is fun, but it's really deconstructive. You don't wanna be playing the same songs every night, night after night.

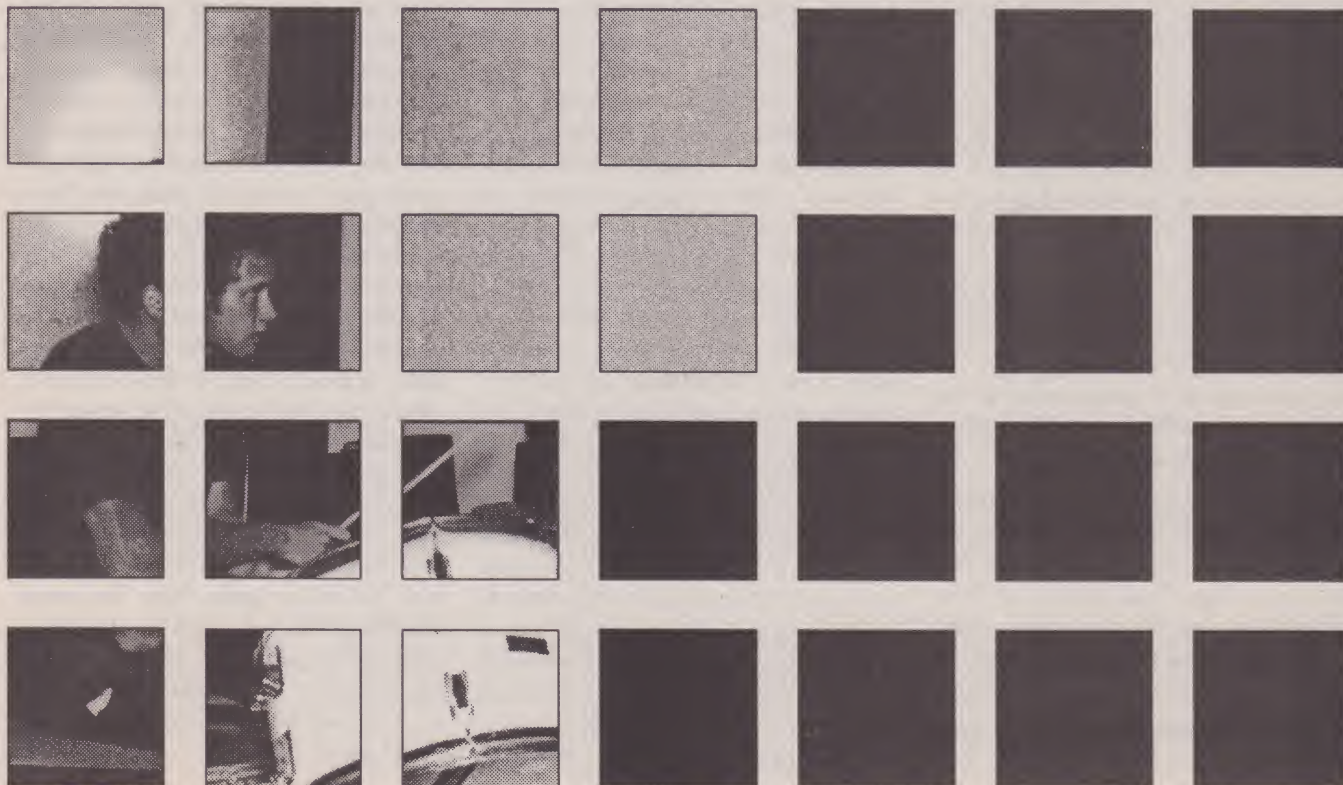
So all this is making your songs and the process lose meaning?

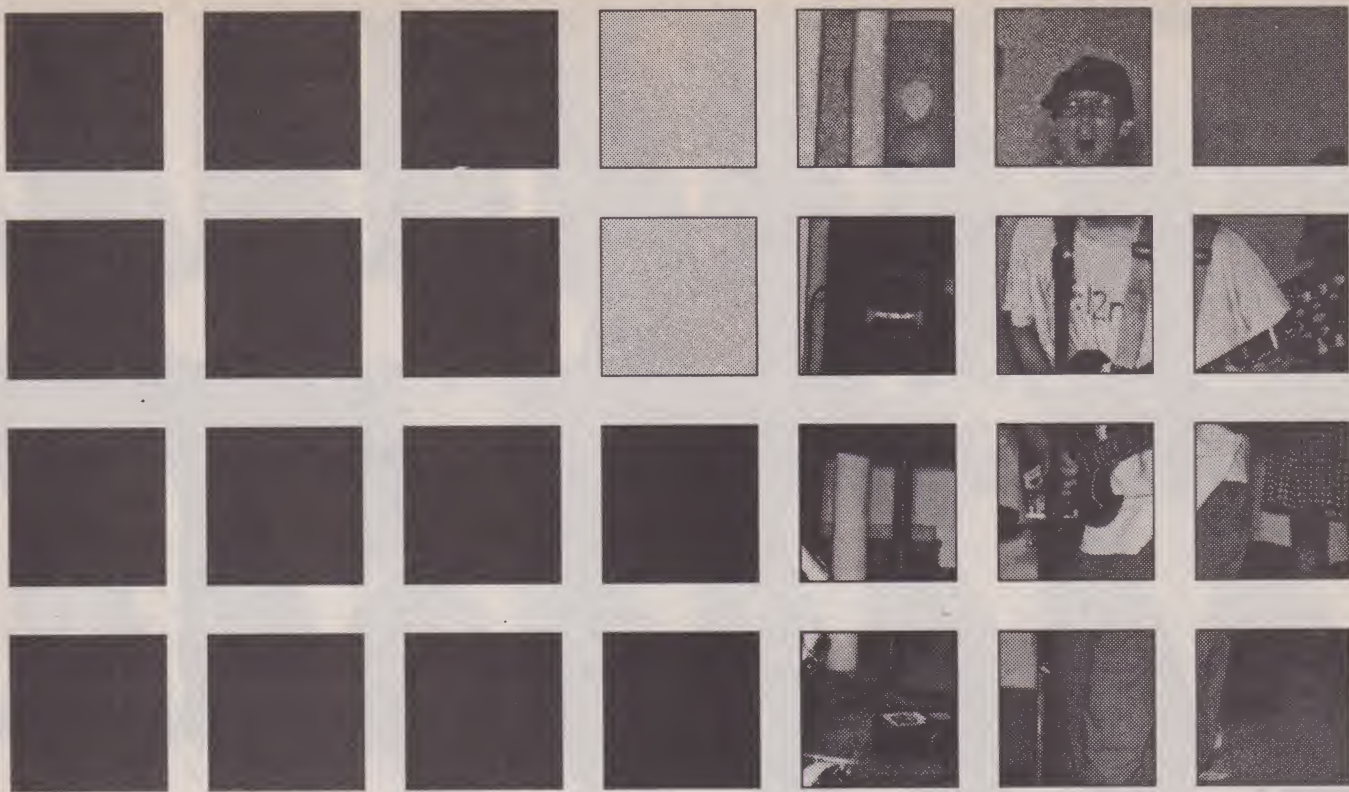
Oh yeah. I can't take playing our songs anymore. It's like that movie *Shine*. The guy practices and practices and practices and when it comes time to play it, he just sort of loses himself. He watches his hands and passes out. That's what it is. It's so frustrating, so pointless. It brings me really close to the point of nervous breakdown.

Are you going to try doing something different from Crom Tech?

No. The music I am playing now is really who I am and what I am. I'm thinking I just can't

crom tech I know it's weird for me to say this, but I've pretty much been waiting to be put away.





crom tech I try and keep my mind active, so I don't worry about it too much.

do this "punk rock," touring and just having to deal with the bullshit that we had to tonight.

So you want to take a break from the standard forums of punk?

Yeah. The most fun I've had is playing shows at our house for just our freinds. It's low key and the experience is really special. It's hard to have these kids think I'm cool, having to live with the fact that certain people think of me as above everyone else. I just... I'm not cool. You're not cool. My motivation for playing music is backed by a desire for a need to do what you can do with what you have, Sometimes someone gets lucky. I'm just working with what I have.

So this is pretty much your marketable skill?

[laughs] Yeah. If I had to have a job-job, I'd want to be a book critic or something. Just sit around and get paid to read all day—or watch movies. But a job is a job and either way if someone's paying me to do something, I'm eventually going to start to hate it.

Even playing music?

Exactly. This is a job as well. I just don't like to make money for doing things. I think money should just be there and people can do whatever they want. But that's not how the world works.

Are your songs about that?

No, No, not at all. The songs are all made up words—Spanish, English, gibberish—conglomerated together. They aren't real words.

What is your favorite word you have made up so far?

I go through phases. The main word that comes up on both records that I like a lot is "plarm." There's no meaning hidden in those words, it's just bullshit... ¶ I have to say, you're catching me at an awkward time with all of this. Where I am in terms of this band and all this... I'm pretty much at my wit's end.

What's your personal version of hell?

Oh, being attacked. I have this weird fear of these skinny glowing... kind of like pumpkin-heads... but morphing. I'm not able to get away from them fully. I think that's why I'm so into goodness. I'm getting to that point where I have this fear of a physical or mental manifestation of hell. A fear of losing one's mind. I fear that.

So, how do you deal with that? Do you just embrace it, or do you have a coping mechanism?

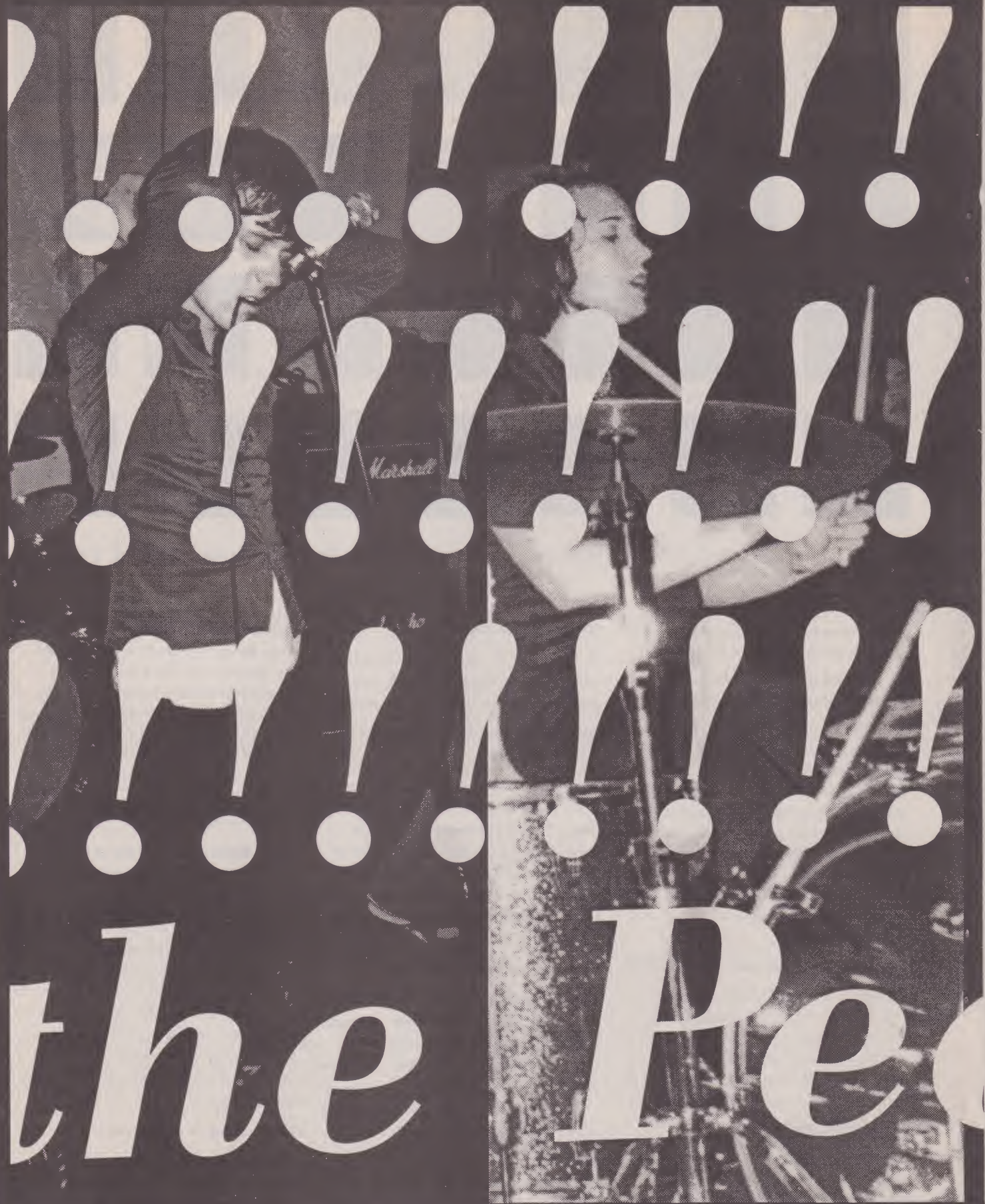
I try and keep my mind active, so I don't worry about it too much. If I sit there and just worry that I'm losing my mind, I'm already halfway there. I know it's weird for me to say this but I've pretty much been waiting to be put away. And I never want to talk to anyone or deal with it. I'm just waiting to be confined to... I don't want to be confined, I just want to be away from everything. Then I won't lose my mind.

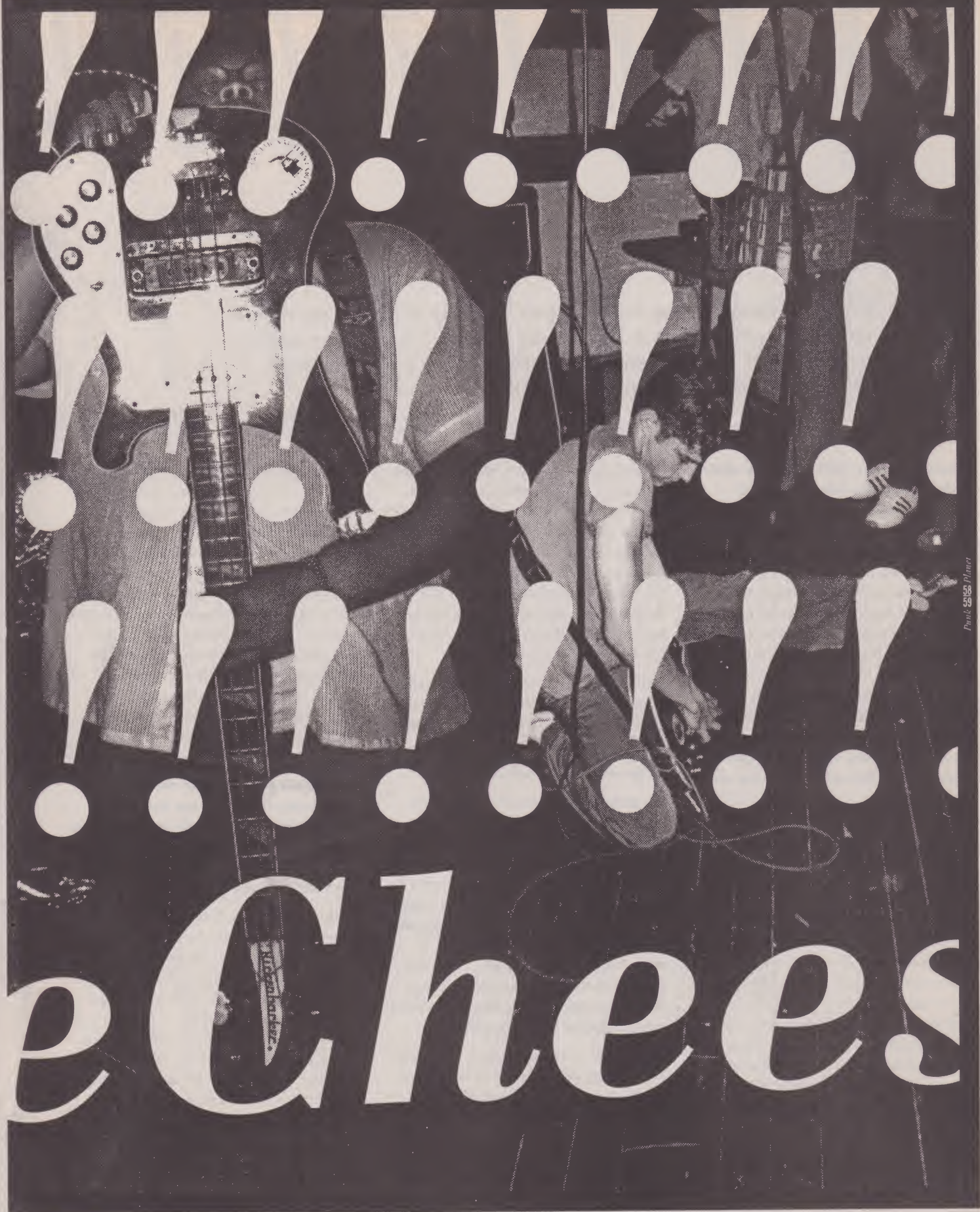
Is the burden inside of you or is it coming from the outside—from the conventions of this world?


It's really unbearable in a way. I'm a masochist as far as I continually put myself in these situations where I'm totally trapped. Like before we went on this tour, I quit. I just said, "I can't do this." I got talked back into it, otherwise it was just gonna be Malcolm. That was my solution against touring. I just talked to some people about it and decided to do it and this is pretty much it. For now.

What's going to satiate you?

Just being able to spend time making something new. I can't stand playing these songs every night. I just want to write a millions songs and continue to create. ©







Last weekend I was in Olympia and my friend Lois made some remark about a band and I said, "God, they really act sexy on stage." And she said, "Have you ever seen your husband on stage?" –Molly

Berkeley, California's PeeChees are the hardest working band in show business. A typical PeeChees show features fog, strobes, choreographed guitar moves and a singer that bumps and grinds like a prisoner on his first conjugal visit in 10 years. Even that doesn't do it justice. The PeeChees live are a sight to behold. Musically, the PeeChees skirt genres, sounding something like many, holding true to none. It's a rare thing in punk today—a band that truly has a sound all its own. I got the chance to sit down with singer Chris Appelgren and drummer Molly Neuman—who in addition to being in the PeeChees are married and both work at Lookout! Records—about being married, being uncategorizable and being the sexiest band in the nation.

Interview by **Dan Sinker**

The first thing I want to talk about was the dynamic of being married and being in a band together.

Chris: In our band, we all have distinctive roles and things that we're supposed to be responsible for. Molly and my roles a lot of times have been administrative. A lot of times we have things we have to take care of and often times for me, I think they are at odds with being in a relationship that's really personal. A lot of times it seems better to set that aside and take care of band business. Plus, if you're on tour, you want to try and keep attention balanced between four people instead of just between each other.

Molly: Our marriage affects our band not because we want to be romantic or get away or anything—although that sometimes comes up

[laughs]—but more so that we're at a different stage in our lives and so we're just generally more interested in having things organized and orderly and focused. We end up kind of taking on more responsibility. That kind of becomes that thing of "mom and dad," which is not that bad because everybody has their own ability to do all the things that we do, it's just that we're more inclined to. But to be realistic, we don't really dwell on that too much.

Chris: Also if there is ever any kind of conflict or issues to sort out, we're kind of an assumed team. Our opinions are assumed to be exactly the same and in unison.

Molly: And that's not necessarily true.

The people I know who are married love each other very much, but there are the never-ending little arguments and tensions that go along with it. I don't know anyone else who is married and in a band, but I do know people who go out and are in a band together and they're always being perceived by their bandmates as "ganging up" on them. Yet, they're always like, "What are you talking about, we're always fighting!" They fight together more than two people in a band together would normally fight.

Molly: When we started this band, we were dating and living together but we weren't married and it was a really exciting thing to be doing together as a couple and with our really good friends. There was all of that excitement. When we started to be a little more serious and try to make albums and become more real, that's right when we started the process of getting married.

When our first album came out, six months later we got married. That six months was totally consumed by our wedding process. We still played shows and stuff, but that's a really hard time for any couple. I think that we were particularly under a lot of stress because we were really young. As soon as we were done with the wedding and everything was okay and normal again, we started putting all this energy into our band, trying to tour and making a new album. Right now, we just got back from Europe a month and a half ago and we're not really concentrating on the band. We're all trying to regroup as individuals. The past year and a half has been spent working on the band. Right now we're kind of exhausted.

Another thing about being married and being in the PeeChees, and this is more directed towards you, Molly, is Chris' stage persona. [everyone laughs] Aren't there times where you're just like, "Oh my god, what are you doing?"

Molly: It's really funny because since I play drums, I don't really see what he's doing that much. I can kinda see a little bit of the writhing, [laughs] but I don't see a lot of the facial emotions that he's expressing. Unless I see a videotape, I really am not aware of it. Last weekend I was in Olympia and my friend Lois made some remark about a band and I said, "God, they really act sexy on stage." And she said, "Have you ever seen your husband on stage?" [laughs]

So Chris, where does this personality you have on stage come from?

Chris: I don't know where it comes from exactly. It kind of makes me uncomfortable when people

To me, the things I do on stage seem like the most vulnerable things I can do—the most vulnerable things to myself and the most vulnerable version of myself that I can present. It's an intense experience to me. It's fine that it comes across just as sexy but it's more about trying to be naked—but with clothes on. —Chris

put it in terms of being "sexy" or something like that because I'm not trying to affect anything. Playing a show or being in front of people, you realize that you're in a position of being watched and you've got to do something to keep people's attention. That may be dishonest, but you can't deny that it's performance. To me, the things I do on stage seem like the most vulnerable things I can do—the most vulnerable things to myself and the most vulnerable version of myself that I can present. It's an intense experience to me. It's fine that it comes across just as sexy but it's more about trying to be naked—but with clothes on.

When I've tried to describe what Chris does live to people that haven't seen you, the best equation I can come up with is a hardcore band. The singer will be this totally nice and soft-spoken person before they play and then the band will start and he'll just become possessed by demons! It's very much the same with you. You'll be really articulate and nice before the show and then you'll get up on stage, and it'll be like "Was he drunk when I was talking to him? I swear he's nothing like this!" Yet it doesn't seem like it's fake at all, probably because it isn't.

Molly: It's true with all of us, really. Carlos and Rop both have incredible stage presences. It's never anything that we've discussed. They have moves that they plan out but the way that they approach their performance is totally their own—it's each of our own things. One of the coolest things about our band, I think, is that so much of it comes

from within rather than any sort of, "You do this and I'll do that." It can be really intense.

Chris: We never talk about what we're going to do, or what our band is supposed to be.

Molly: Which can present its own set of problems because then all of a sudden you're on this path of individuality that doesn't have anything to do with one another and that can bring up its own complex situations.

There just aren't a lot of bands that are working as hard as you guys are working for your audience. [laughs] You could just as easily stand around and play but you don't. You had the curtain and now you've got the fog and the light show and Carlos and Rop's choreography and Chris's... whatever it is you do. Was all this planned from day one?

Chris: Not at all. A lot of the specific ideas about more of the theatrical stuff came from Carlos—those are his ideas. For me, with the punk rock that I was into, ridiculous chaos was a more appropriate as a stage persona. We all talk about that stuff and try to do things that we all agree will look kinda cool. But we don't want it to get in the way and seem like a crutch. It's kind of a bummer when your props are the thing that makes you most interesting.

You don't want to become ZZ Top or something and get upstaged by your stage show.

Chris: Absolutely not. Carlos is a big fan of bands like Queen and stuff that are just about rock 'n' roll. We're all big fans of rock 'n' roll

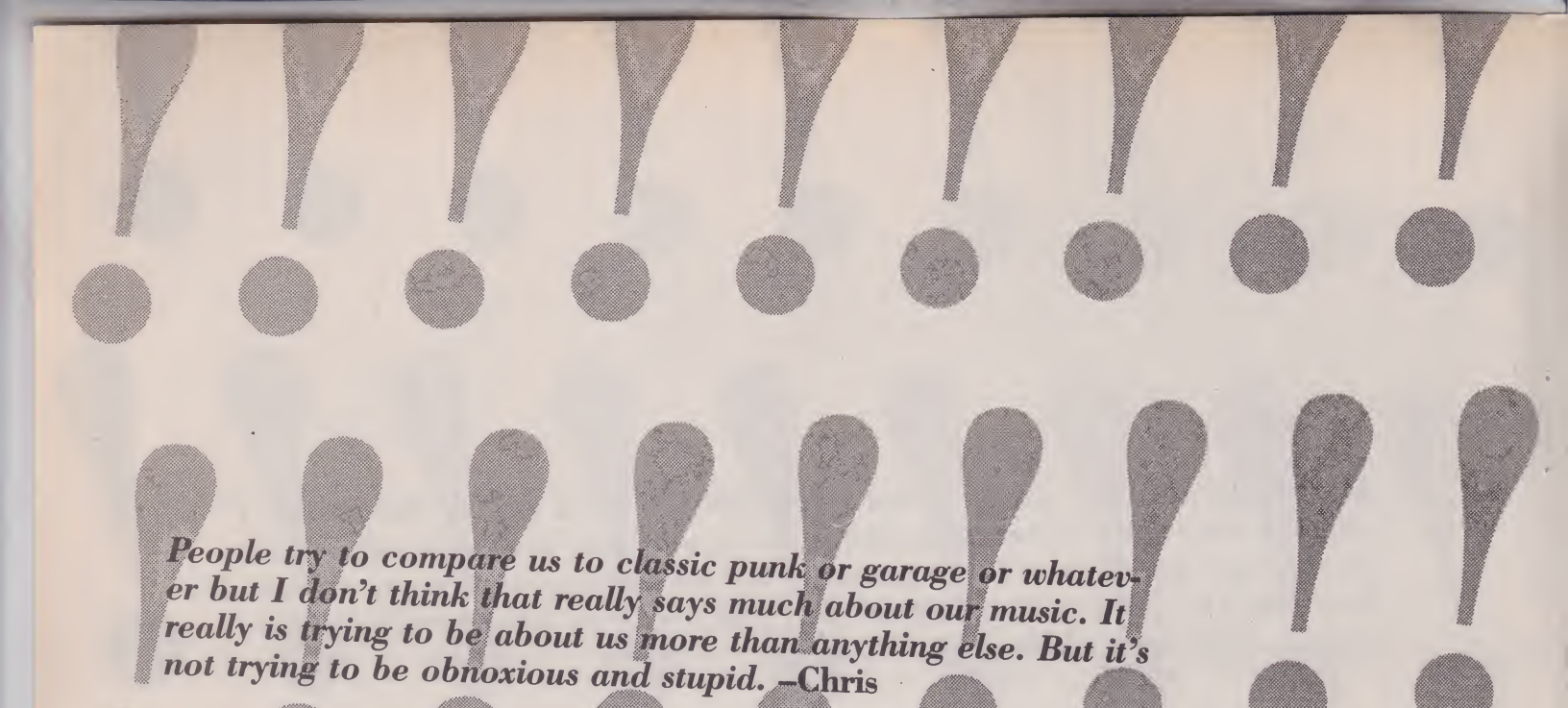
and it just seems fun. We do work hard, we do think about it. Playing live is the best representation of us.

Molly: We never get a chance to work these things out before we're on stage. You have to work out the kinks of the lights or the fog as you go along. By the end of the tour, we will have totally figured out how it works. It's like, "OK, let's just do that for the first three songs and the last song." We started out doing the lights for the whole show and people would complain about having epileptic seizures or whatever. [laughs]

Chris: I like the fact that despite it appearing sophisticated, it's actually quite haphazard. I think that's charming.

One thing you had mentioned before was this group of individuals coming together and being in a band and that's definitely true with the history of you two. Coming from Chris being in Bumblescrump and Molly being in Bratmobile it seems like the PeeChees isn't the obvious sum of those two bands.

Molly: Carlos and Rop were in a band together called Rice and they toured with Chris' band and I hung out with them on tour for a few shows. Then for the next few weeks they stayed at Chris' house and I was staying there too and we all became really great friends. They were such characters—Carlos was like 15 back then—they had such distinctive personalities and we all had this really good comradery right away. I moved here in February of '93 and we started the PeeChees in February of '94. I was



People try to compare us to classic punk or garage or whatever but I don't think that really says much about our music. It really is trying to be about us more than anything else. But it's not trying to be obnoxious and stupid. —Chris

still in Bratmobile then, but I wanted to do new things, especially since I had been playing music that was a lot more straightforward and simple. I wanted to play stuff that would let me rock out more. Chris and I went to San Diego to practice and see what it was like and it really worked. Six months later our single came out and we went on tour the next day. They moved up here after a year or so and we all kinda got more serious about it.

With everyone coming from different directions, where did the music come from? The music is unlike anything you all had done before. It was almost as if you sat down and tried to decide what all of you hadn't played previously and ended up with the PeeChees sound, which is a really distinctive sound.

Chris: I think that it was really born out of the fact that we have really different backgrounds. The way that we figure songs out in practice or something like that is an involved process where we all temper the song with ourselves. The end result is hard to classify. We're trying to make music that's reflective of us and not trying to sound like any genre. People try to compare us to classic punk or garage or whatever but I don't think that really says much about our music. It really is trying to be about us more than anything else. But it's not trying to be obnoxious and stupid.

Molly: I think that's the noblest intention of any band: not to be obnoxious and stupid. [laughs]

Chris: Those two things are pretty common when you veer of established paths. If you want to be a Chuck Berry-style rock 'n' roll band, you

know what you need to do. If you try to be more personal or more individualistic, you tend to oftentimes be more stupid too.

Molly: As we've gone on, we've all gotten into new things and learned about new things. We now have to refigure out where we're going. Carlos and Rop have gotten into other stuff. Carlos has gotten really serious about his dancing—he's into salsa dancing but he's just started to do tango dancing too. He's as serious about that aspect of his life as he is about punk rock. And Rop is more serious about DJing and scratching. Those are just not real punk rock things. Chris and I also have our own interests that don't necessarily help out the band. For all of our futures, we have to figure out how we approach things now because now we're not just hanging out at shows all the time.

Chris: I think it's kinda hard because people aren't that open to new things. There are so many bands and so few have a really distinctive voice that you can associate with them. All the punk rock bands I love don't sound like each other and they all have distinctive sounds and characteristics that you only associate with them. I think that's one of the things that we're trying to do and yet nowadays, that's kind of a thing for people to understand. Locally, we've got the problem about not being punk enough for the punk rockers yet not being something else enough for the indie rock types.

Molly: It's really true in Europe because everything's always categorized there. We're not like any of the big things. That's difficult for people to process. Once they hear us and if we have a

good show, then we can probably win them over. But it's not like we're an automatic, "Oh yeah, that band has the credentials and that thing that's really going to make me check them out." That's been a challenge for us. A lot of the rewards that come with being in a band—a lot of people going to your shows or a lot of people buying your records—isn't there.

Chris: In some place like Chicago or New York or whatever, it can seem really easy. But as soon as you go out of those places and go someplace else, it's like our first tour all over again. You feel this challenge to win over the few people that happen to be there.

Molly: That's one thing that we're not that good at. We get easily frustrated at the reality of, "There's not that many people here, we're going to have to really rock out to freak them out." Some bands can really have a really incredible show based on that.

Based on being the underdog...

Molly: Yeah. But I think we're really challenged by that. Which is unfortunate because sometimes there aren't a lot of people at our shows and you don't want to be depressed about it, but it's hard.

Chris: We do work hard on stage and so it's hard to be faced with this reality that tells you that your work doesn't amount to that much. That it doesn't matter how many records you put out or how many tours you go on, they're still not going to know who you are or they're still not going to understand what you're doing. It's not terrible, because that's part of the challenge



I think that's the noblest intention of any band: not to be obnoxious and stupid. —Molly

about being a band. There are thousands of bands across America that face that every night. That's the only thing that makes you feel better about it.

Molly: Because of the business that we do, we're pretty in tune with the way our band fits into the rest of punk.

Chris: It's true. It's really clear to me that in order to have a really wide appeal in punk is to be really obvious. Nobody likes to go and be like, "What was that?" People want the information and they want to have a grasp.

I think that a lot of people, when they want to be entertained, just want to be entertained—they don't want to have to work for it. But some people do. I'm definitely of the school of, "I want to be challenged by something that I'm seeing." I think that when a band like that does connect with someone, you connect at a much stronger level than a really simple, obvious band does.

Molly: I think that's true. Sometimes with the bands that we're working with we call it a "small but devoted audience." It's really true. There are a bunch of people who I really respect that get our band and champion us. That means a lot because it keeps your inspiration going. I mean, I never thought that I'd be in a band that would make money or be popular or whatever—that's never been a driving force of the PeeChees. We have pretty modest goals: We like it when people are at our shows, it makes it more fun; we like it when people like our records. But we're not stressing out about it.

You raise an interesting point. Having the jobs that you guys have at Lookout!, you know a lot of how the industry works. Do you try to keep that separate from the band? I know that the PeeChees are a Kill Rock Stars band and not a Lookout! band. Was that on purpose? How easy is it to keep that kind of thing separate?

Molly: When we first started the band, we just wanted to do a single and the only real option was Kill Rock Stars. I was in Bratmobile and Slim was my best friend. I said, "could you put out our record?" and he said OK. Over time, it became more about keeping things separate and having more accountability. When we recorded our first album, the issue came up about what label to put it out on. At that time, I was the only one doing promotion and publicity at all here—now we have three people doing what I was doing and I can't imagine having that responsibility. It's also an issue of credibility. A lot of bands do their own promotion, but I didn't feel like I could be in competition with the bands I was already working with. Having Kill Rock Stars do everything was really preferable.

Chris: When we're a band, we want to be a band and when we're working we want to work. The two things do support each other in that my experience of being in a band has been really valuable when dealing with other bands. Going to Europe and the challenges that that presented was a revelation in trying to understand what happens when Lookout! bands go to Europe. If they call and tell us it's really been hard or really terrible, I know what they're talking about now. I think that that's ..

been really been good. A lot of labels are run by people who have a really abstract idea about what it's like to play music.


Molly: The past year, we've toured the US three times and to be able to see how things develop. To play a place and have it be really good one time and then go back and have no one there, you really understand how strange the punk rock scene in America is right now.

Chris: You don't get that idea if you're just sitting in your room behind a computer.

To wrap up, where do you see the PeeChees going? How do you see fitting the PeeChees into your life?

Chris: That's a weird question right now because we're just hanging out. We haven't really sat down and had a conversation about it. We've been so geared up about the things that we've already did, we recorded some singles and went to Europe, that we haven't gotten together subsequently. In my mind—I think in all of our minds right now—I'd like to be able to develop it further. To refine it and develop it further so that after a while, after more work, people can understand us because we've given them enough information or because we've put out enough records or we've played their town enough times so they can understand us as the PeeChees and not need to worry about categorization or whatever.

Molly: And to spawn a whole new genre of clone bands. [laughs] ©



“...it's only fun stuff for me. There is no growing up or making
DISCOUNT
big decisions as far as I'm concerned.”

Getting to sit down with Allison, James, Bill and Ryan—collectively known as Discount—after their show with the Dillinger 4 outside of a very hot and malodorous Fireside Bowl was an absolute pleasure. They are some of the nicest kids on earth and are totally easy to talk to. After the interview, I just wanted to jump in their van with them and take off on tour. Their infectious brand of poppy punk songs and right-on attitude make them a charming bunch.

Interview by Josh Hooten

How many shows do you play—when you're not playing with The Dillinger 4, that is—that you get to see live sex acts onstage?

Ryan: We played this show in Wilmington, North Carolina and the headliner of the show was this guy—I forget his name—who was a paraplegic and he had no control over his vocal chords. He would bang along to rock 'n' roll music that had four different guitar players, who couldn't play music whatsoever, while he sat in his wheelchair screaming the whole time. At the end, this lady had sex with him onstage. She totally propped him up and did it. We didn't watch that, we had to leave long before that.

Bill: We left. It seemed really disturbing. It was terrible.

Ryan: It wasn't even artistic. It was just really gross.

At this point, we get interrupted by a man asking for money who is incredibly and incoherently drunk. He says something about getting ripped off for \$120 and explains that he's got identification that he'll drop off to us on Monday. I don't know what the hell he was going on about. Allison, kind soul that she is, gave the man a little something for his effort. He, kind soul that he is, kisses her on the head and wanders off talking about wanting to die.

So you traveled across the country four times in six months last year. To be able to do that, you really have to be able to stand each other that whole time. I'm curious what the dynamic is among you?

Allison: I was just talking to my friend and he was saying how he thought each one of us was really, really different, and I think that's true.

Bill: It's been different in the six months since the big tour last year. Since then, we moved apart, physically, and we went to school for a semester. But before that, we were from a small town called Vero Beach and there's really not much to do so we were around each other all the time. We were generally in the same vicinity every night so it was like "what are we going to do? Should we go on tour and play music or just sit around at home and hang out and drink?"

Allison: Plus, we're conditioned to each others moods now.

Bill: We've been getting along super good on this tour.

Allison: I think the more people you bring on tour, the better it is. We're touring with them now [she motions to a huge van that has all these attachments and rooms and things welded onto it, which belongs to the band This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb] so there's 12 of us. With that many people, you can't get sick of any one person because you have twelve people and you're always talking to somebody different.

Ryan: You ignore the person you're mad at right then.

Bill: I ignore Ryan a lot.

Ryan: Me and Bill don't talk much. [Laughs]

Allison: I think it's a good thing to have a crowd with you.

What do you guys fight about the most?

Bill: Stupid stuff.

Allison: There's no one topic that we constantly fight about.

Ryan: Just stupid little family squabble stuff. Brother and sister kinds of fights. When Bill and I get into our little tiffs we usually just take it outside and brawl. That way we can just get it all out. [laughs]

Bill: I wish we had a topic. We really never have a topic, we just get grumpy when we don't sleep or eat. Whoever is in our general vicinity, stay out of our way.

Ryan: This trip is going too smoothly I think—except for the tornadoes. Tornadoes have been following us to shows. We've run away from three tornadoes. I think they really want to see us play.

Bill: We were in a Perkin's in Green Bay Wisconsin for six hours...

Allison: The sirens were going constantly.

Ryan: The sky was green! And there was lightning!

You've never seen a tornado?

Allison: We're from Florida. We've got hurricanes, but not tornadoes.

So how do you feel being the band that is followed by natural disasters everywhere you go?

Allison: It makes the drives exciting. I feel like everyday we're skidding across median strips to turn around and run back and hide in basements. The weather channel is turned up really loud. It's so funny—it's like, "here we are again!"

Bill: Or everybody's in the basement of a truck stop in the middle of Missouri. James and Allison were outside watching the storm, but everybody else was hiding.

I love really bad weather. That's what I loved most about living in Florida: the thunderstorms and the hurricane weather.

Allison: Storms are amazing!

Being on the road for as long as you guys are must get tiring after a while, right?

Bill: This is what we do. That's why we don't mind getting in a van for six months and just driving and not sleeping and hanging out and playing shows. This is what we want to do and we're happy doing it. You go see some band that has some massive guarantee—that's fine and that's great and it's like they're not real people, but they're just doing this for points of some kind. I know that sounds really clichéd, but seriously. The other night there was this band and I felt completely gross feeling that we were even playing with them. These bands are just going through the motions. It makes you feel weird. It's like there are two teams: The bands that are doing it for themselves team, and the bands that are doing it to be hip team.

Did you all grow up in Vero Beach and then spread out from there?

Ryan: No, I lived in New York for 11 years, I've been in Vero Beach since I was 14.

You all went to high school together and stuff?

James: I moved there in the 8th grade.

Ryan: Allison and I were on the same bus in junior high.

Bill: I'm two or three years older than they are, so I finished before them.

Allison: I was born there and I hate it, but that's another story.

When I was a teenager I was mad at a lot of external stuff—pissed at the world kind of stuff—but as I get a little older, I realize these days I'm only really angry at myself.

Ryan: I'm just angry at Ayn Rand because I just read *The Fountainhead* and I hate people now. It's over.

When you get over that feeling, read *Atlas Shrugged* to renew it. It's the same story just with different characters. She's only really got one story to tell, but it's a really good story.

Ryan: *Anthem*, the same thing, just the short version.

I want to talk to you, Allison, about the artwork that you do for your records. I see a lot of people doing artwork for themselves or their labels or whatever but most of them are budding graphic designers working on computers. You do your stuff by hand and it has a lot more personality. Do you do artwork all the time or just when it's time to make a record?

Allison: I always do it. I go in spurts between art and writing stuff and I go back and forth. For a long time I was doing more art, I guess I still am.

I think it's interesting that you do all of it. I don't think it's some sort of anomaly that you do your own artwork, I think a lot of people do, but I think yours is a lot more art than it is...

Bill: Pointing and clicking?

Allison: I'll write a song and those will be the words and what they mean to me, and someone else doing the artwork would really bug me because they have no idea. Even if they did know what I was talking about, they'd have no idea. Even if the pictures don't visibly have anything to do with the songs, in the long run they still do to me.

I run into that a lot because I layout a lot of records for people.

Allison: Isn't that just weird?

It's really odd sometimes. It's totally rewarding when I'm working for people who I can connect with and who's music affects me strongly on a personal level. It still comes out as my interpretation of what they're trying to communicate—it's a collaboration. But then there are people who really don't have any idea about what they want and leave it totally up to me.

Allison: I really think that a lot of people don't care. They just want it to look nice. Like it's the music that's important.

But it seems weird to me that so many people can make art in the form of music but don't think visually at all.

Allison: On the other hand there's Scott Sinclair, who does artwork for Hot Water Music, and I almost consider him a member of that band even though I've never met him because he's such a constant part of them. He seems like he's got a connection with them and the art always has a story behind it having to do with those guys.

So you're all pretty young, yet you've been doing this for a while. It's right around the time when a lot of people your age get tripped up thinking about going to school full-time or starting some career of some sort. Life decision stuff like should you start doing more "grown up" stuff or should you keep doing all this fun stuff? Do you ever think about the sacrifices of doing this?

Ryan: Right now we're doing half the year on tour and half the year in school.

Allison: As far as a career, it's only fun stuff for me. There is no growing up or making big decisions as far as I'm concerned.

Ryan: If we do decide to start a career, we'd have to be done with school, but at this rate we won't be done with school for eight years! By the time I'm 30 maybe we'll start settling down. But right now, no way.

Bill: I can't really think of any real sacrifices.

Ryan: Except for goats.

Allison: This is what we want to do, so we're just doing it.

Plus, the real life stuff isn't going anywhere. It will always be there if you need it.

Ryan: This is real life stuff. ☺

20

QUESTIONS

with the band:

Paris, Texas

1. When did your band form?

December '97 during Christmas break.

2. When will it break up?

December 31, 1999.

3. What have you released so far?

A split 7".

4. Why do you play the music that you play?

Because that is the music we play, dumbshit.

5. What's the weirdest thing you've ever had happen at a show?

Playing at "That One Place" in Rockford, we saw a 28-year-old hessian with a blonde, floppy, comb-over mowhawk hitting on a 12-year-old girl.

6. What's the best show you've ever played?

A show here in Madison at our friend April's house in April.

7. State your purpose.

We do have a manifesto but it would take too long to type out here.

8. Do you mind that your band is always being billed as "Those guys who bite monkey privates on stage"?

"Those guys who bite monkey privates on stage"? No.

9. How do you describe yourself to relatives who have no idea about what you play?

Not quite indie rock but not quite punk rock.

10. How do you describe yourself to kids in the scene who haven't heard you?

Same as above.

11. What bands do you see as your contemporaries?

Good question.

12. What is the antithesis of your band?

M.I.J.

13. Outside of music and bands, what influences you?

Beer, Liquor and Fishing Tackle.

14. What is "selling out"?

Compromising your principles solely for monetary gain.

15. If you could make a living off of your band, would you?

Hell yeah, in a heartbeat.

16. Where do you practice?

In a basement we share with spiders and bats and cigarette butts.

17. If you could play on a four band bill, with any bands that have ever existed, who would you play with, and what order would they play?

Manowar
Tortoise
Dirty Three

18. What goals do you have as a band?

To not self-destruct in a short time.

19. What makes for a good show?

One that starts on time and ends on time... and where our van, Van Helen, gets us there.

20. If you were to cover a song (that you don't already) what would it be?

Radio Free Europe—REM.

20

QUESTIONS

with the zine:

Second Choice

1. How long have you been doing your zine and what issue are you on?

I began to compile materials and information for the first issue of *Second Choice* in November of 1996. In March of that year, I released the first issue in its photocopied, cut and paste splendor. September of 1998 is right around the corner, and issue four is done.

2. How long do you plan on doing it for?

I haven't picked a date that I'm going to stop, yet.

3. What would cause you to quit?

If I could overcome my stubborn attitude of not quitting something once I started, I would quit. More importantly, I would quit if I felt I wasn't doing a good job.

Settling for mediocrity is not okay.

4. How do you distribute your zine?

I don't do much distribution myself. So, the folks at Desert Moon Periodicals, Lumberjack, No Idea, Revelation, and Temperance help me with that. I bring a few copies to shows, on occasion.

5. Why is your zine called what it's called?

Have you ever tried to play an instrument and then realize that you have absolutely no musical ability? I did, and I don't. *Second Choice* came next, and with time I realized that I love it.

6. In order of importance, what would you rank as the three main subjects you cover?

Music, personality and literature.

7. What's the hardest part about doing your zine?

Until July 13, 1998, I didn't own a computer. I always liked the way a zine looked when it was well-designed with the aid of technology. I think it looks nicer than the best cut-and-paste job. So, between friends and Kinko's I designed *Second Choice*. I transcribed interviews by hand and then typed them. That is a technique, I'm glad to say, I won't be using any longer. So, finding a way to produce *Second Choice* was the hardest part. Now, finding time to do everything that I want to is hard. There are only so many hours in a day, and I need my beauty rest.

8. What's the most rewarding?

It's rewarding when someone tells me that the best interview they ever read was in *Second Choice*. It's rewarding to know that *Second Choice* has spawned events in my life that I never thought would have been spawned. I've never thought I would operate my own business, and here I am, doing it. Thanks *Second Choice*.

9. Are you doing your zine for the free records?

Unfortunately, I don't receive many records that I enjoy. Heck, I got the Saves the Day CD for free. That makes it worth it. Yeah, it's for the free stuff.

10. Was it weird to interview Robert Downey Jr. when you were serving time together?

I was too drunk to remember.

11. What was the best and worst interview you've ever done?

I attempted to interview Better Than 1000 at one of their first shows in NYC. With no questions prepared and no intentions in mind, the interview was awful. Ray Cappo walked out on me and Ken Olden was explaining why his floor tom is set up the way it is. I feel bad that they

had to suffer through that. Tim from Avail and Dan O'Mahoney were my best interviewees. Tim broke down everything I threw at him with a simple answer: Life is complicated and at times you are not supposed to understand that. Mr. O'Mahoney, well, he told me the best way to play your hand at blackjack, and a lot more. Both interviews are in issue four.

12. Quote your favorite thing ever said on the screens of your zine.

It was a toss up:

"Would you rather chop your dick off and throw it over Niagara Falls, or throw Zeke (my dog's name is Zeke) in a woodchipper?" —Tim from Avail

"Naw, I think you have total control. If you contract that muscle it will shoot. If you don't, it will ooze. Sometimes it happens, and sometimes it doesn't. Shoot, ooze. Shoot, ooze." —Brian from 9 Lives

13. Do you write everything yourself? If so, why? If not, how do you find writers?

I don't write everything myself, although I do a majority of the writing. Luck has found me the writers that I have, and if I could find more of them I would write less.

14. How is your zine produced?

A driver human that goes by the name of Tom, who resides in Chicago, takes care of that. He uses a Webb press, with a combination of 80 bright groundwood and newsprint. The bright stuff is for the cover.

15. Handwritten vs. Typewriter vs. Computer?

Computer. A day hasn't passed, since I bought my computer, that I haven't thought about how else I could have used the money.

16. What other zines inspire you?

Since it's inception in October of last year, I haven't missed a word written in *Just in Time for Nothing*. Brian Molloy is a good writer, and if you haven't heard of him yet, you're missing out. *Punk Planet* has some of the best articles I've ever read.

17. What is "selling out?"

Selling what?

18. If you could live off of your zine, would you?

The whole idea seems like a dream, but I was told once that dreams can come true.

19. If you had a chance to interview someone who you most likely would never have a chance to talk to, who would it be?

My father.

20. Describe your dream interview (who, where, what setting?)

Being over 3000 miles away, Seattle is an almost ominous city to me. To capture the lore of the city, I would hope that it would be raining. Ed Vedder and I would start from the beginning, before he was wearing tights, and stop at that very moment. Not a thing would be left out, and I'm sure that it would be the best interview I have ever done.

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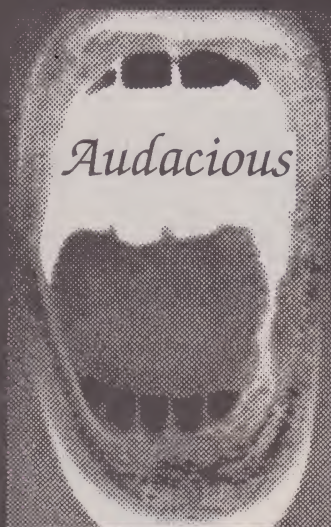
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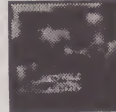
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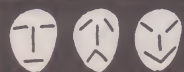
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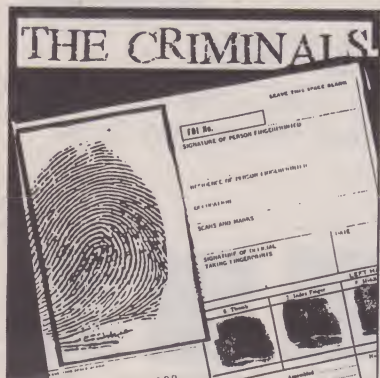
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BEHIND ENEMY LINES

JON STRANGE TRAVELS TO IRAQ AND FINDS THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE U.N. SANCTIONS

I've been to Baghdad. Not many Americans can say that, and our government likes it that way. On May 6, 1998, along with 81 others, I boarded a plane headed for Amman, Jordan—the first leg in a trip called the “Iraq Sanctions Challenge: A humanitarian mission to deliver medicine to the people of Iraq and to protest the sanctions.” What we did is illegal. The United States government prohibits US citizens from any “transactions related to travel in or to Iraq.” Their reasoning behind this is simple: If people could witness what the US government is doing to the Iraqi people on our behalf, support for the sanctions that have been imposed on them for the last seven years would vanish.

The Iraq Sanctions Challenge had two goals: first, to deliver emergency medical aid to the people of Iraq and secondly, to draw attention to the injustice of the sanctions. Our delegation of activists, workers, veterans, doctors, students, clergy, and one punk (yours truly) was traveling with over \$4.5 million worth of medical aid—primarily medicines designed to combat intestinal parasites, asthma, and basic infections. The medical situation in Iraq is so dire that they lack even the most common antibiotics; most of the deaths in Iraqi hospitals are caused by common, treatable afflictions.

For me, the most important element of the Iraq Sanctions Challenge was not the medical relief we were bringing with us but the civil disobedience inherent in our trip. By so publicly breaking US sanctions laws, we were making a clear statement of protest against the harm the sanctions have inflicted on the people of Iraq, rather than their intended target, the Hussein government.

A week before the Iraq Sanctions Challenge was scheduled to depart, a US spokesperson stated publicly that if our organization applied for a special waiver to deliver aid to Iraq, it would probably be granted. This would mean that our trip could proceed without any fear of legal troubles with US authorities and that our trip would not violate the sanctions. We chose not to apply for the waiver. We understood the government's move as an effort to silence our protest by endorsing exactly what they themselves were devoid of: compassion for Iraqis.

Crossing into “enemy” territory

We flew to Amman, Jordan and then boarded three buses to cross the desert into Iraq. What could have been an extra hour on the plane became 15 hours by bus, as the only planes that fly over Iraq now are warplanes. At the border, we waited nervously in a grimy room that made the DMV look like my parents' living room. Slowly, the sun crept into sight, clearing away my fears, but throwing

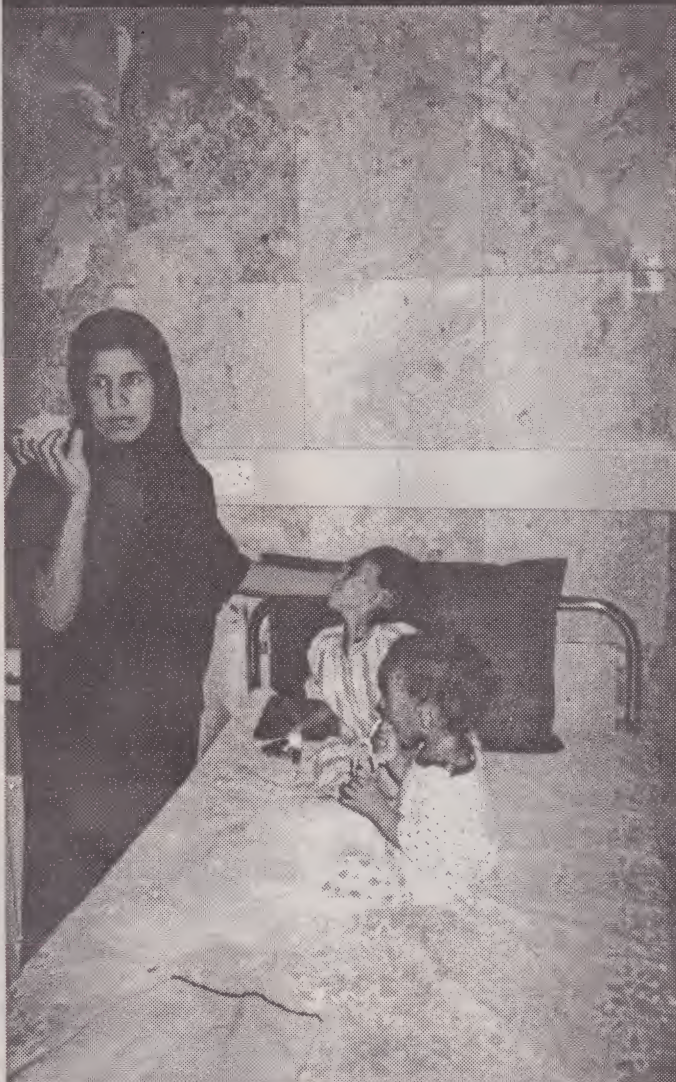
the harsh landscape into even sharper relief. Though we had obtained visas to visit Iraq and Jordan, I was still nervous—after all, this was “enemy territory.” Even though rationally I knew that the Iraqi people were not the enemy, it was still difficult to shake the creepy feeling I had going over the border at four in the morning. We were the only Americans in the country at that time—not counting CNN in Baghdad—and we were on our own if anything went wrong. I certainly wasn't counting on the US government bailing out a bunch of leftists who were already breaking the law.

We made it over the border without a hassle and I stepped off the bus the next day, limbs creaking and stiff, into the comfort of the Al Rasheed Hotel's courtyard. I felt a little uncomfortable staying in a four-star hotel, as a guest of people who had so little for themselves, but we were being hosted by The Organization for Peace, Friendship, and Solidarity, an Iraqi non-governmental organization, so I felt relieved of any concern that the Hussein regime was putting us up in fancy digs. Besides, when you've just succeeded in bringing \$4.5 million worth of medicine into a country which is prohibited from any international trade, concerns over accommodations become minor issues. Already our biggest goal had been accomplished: we had entered “enemy territory” without being stopped by US authorities and had brought with us life-saving medicine.

Accordingly, our first stop the next day was to the Ministry of Health, where we unloaded our beleaguered truck of its cargo. Though the medicines with us were worth a fortune, it was still nowhere near enough to deal with the medical crisis Iraqi doctors face every day. Unlike the Red Cross and other emergency relief organizations, we were only a small group and lacked the structure and expertise necessary to distribute medicine appropriately to the hospitals of Iraq, so we chose to go through the governmental structures already in place. Before the Gulf War, Iraq had one of the best medical systems in the Arab world, and even still UNICEF gives it a top rating for efficient distribution of available medicines. Though I was unnerved about the fact that we were handing over our medicine to the government of Iraq rather than the people, I understood that the Ministry of Health was a reliable organization—and our only viable choice.

Inside the museum of murder

After our meeting with the Deputy Minister of Health, we began our “sightseeing,” in which I witnessed the most frightening suffering imaginable. The scope of disaster in Iraq is so broad, so all-encompassing, and so sustained and drawn out that talk of relief seems absurd. Our first stop was the Al Ameriyah Bomb Shelter Museum—a damaged shelter, maintained as a memorial to those lost in the Gulf War. It was here that we



A scene from the Saddam Hussein Pediatric Teaching Hospital: Suffering, pain, and pandemonium.

encountered the most visceral and frightening evidence of the last time the US had a physical presence in Iraq, rather than the ghost specter of the sanctions.

The Al Ameriyah bomb shelter was used during the Gulf War to protect Iraqis from US bombing raids over Baghdad. Every night around sundown, groups of children were brought to the shelter by a parent, older sibling, or neighbor. The shelter was used exclusively as a civilian shelter from the persistent bombing and protected mostly children, up to 1,100 per night.

On one of these nights, as the Al Ameriyah Shelter was crowded with the usual numbers of children and parents fearful for their lives, a US plane shattered their safety by sending two bombs straight at the shelter. The first, one of the much-touted "smart" bombs, blasted a hole about 15 feet wide in the ceiling of the shelter. The second, another remote-guided weapon, went right into the hole about 30 seconds later, exploding in a ball of fire which incinerated 1,100 people—most of them children.

A few days after the bombing, the US government admitted not only to bombing a civilian bomb shelter, but to doing so deliberately. Their premise for this attack on civilians was that the Al Ameriyah shelter also housed an underground Iraqi military installation. Coming from a military privy to the most advanced surveillance technology in the world, this explanation doesn't exactly ring true.

A handful of people survived the attack; one of them now devotes her life to telling the story of that horrible night to anyone who visits the memorial. She showed us around the shelter—I saw where the first bomb had ripped the ceiling open and steel construction bars that had been melted by the second bomb. Lining the walls of this huge structure were photographs of the people who had died in the bombing—nearly 1,100 faces. I returned to the hotel with all of my pacifist beliefs reaffirmed—such a display of wholesale disregard for life left me sickened.

That night, my roommate and I watched *Airplane* (in English with Arabic subtitles) on the TV in our room. I felt an overwhelming sense of disconnection with reality. It didn't really seem possible that I could be lounging in a comfy hotel room watching American movies on the same day that I witnessed the wreckage of a bomb shelter destroyed by US forces. Knowing that all this was happening in Baghdad, the symbol of the enemy for the past seven years, made it all the more jarring.

Looking into the faces of death

Our journey to the Saddam Hussein Pediatric Teaching Hospital the next day was proof that things could get worse. I visited two wards there: the emergency room and the leukemia ward. Both held sights of immeasurable pain and despair. There weren't enough beds to provide for everyone who needed one so it was common to see two or even three patients (all babies and children) sharing one. The nurses were too busy covering for the shortage in doctors, so the patients' mothers would fill in for the nursing staff of the hospital. Most of the beds were covered in dirty sheets, the patients in even dirtier clothing, and as mothers sat next to their children's beds, they waved flies away from their children's faces.

Many of the hospitals in Iraq have almost no treatments available for their patients. This ranges from insufficient kidney dialysis machinery to a lack of basic painkillers like Tylenol. Due to a general lack of clean water in Iraq, many hospitals operate under unsanitary conditions—virtually guaranteeing the perpetuation of infection and disease. Almost all of the children we saw in the emergency ward were suffering from simple, treatable conditions such as malnourishment (due to widespread food shortages), asthma, or intestinal parasites caused by unclean water. The doctor who was our guide through the hospital told us that most of the kids we saw there would die soon, due to a basic lack of simple medicines.

At first look, the hospital reminded me of images we're all familiar with of third world medical conditions. However, for decades Iraq had a medical system that surpassed most countries in that region. Before the sanctions, Iraqi doctors and hospitals were perfectly capable of treating simple ailments like the ones Iraqi children are now dying of. It isn't a deficiency on the part of the medical system; simply a case of unavailable medicine. The medical crisis in Iraq could very easily be stopped if they had access to necessary medicine.

I feel like no description of the suffering I witnessed at the hospital could ever convey the total hopelessness I saw there. It was written across the faces of everyone in the hospital that they had given up hope for survival. Though the current situation is grim, the fact that there is no foreseeable end to the sanctions eliminates any hope that may have existed.



Our plucky little truck loaded with \$4.5 million worth of medicine at the end of 18 hours of driving over the desert.

"Bush is Criminal"
You have to walk over this portrait of George Bush to get into the Al Rasheed Hotel. It is in the walkway of the main entrance.



A mural painted by Mike Alewitz of the LaborArt & Mural Project entitled *A World Without Borders*.

Mike painted this with the help of Iraqi art students during our 3 days in Baghdad (at the University of Baghdad's Academy of Fine Arts.)

Hope among the hopeless

Finally, there was a bright spot in my three days in Baghdad. At the University of Baghdad, a group of students and teachers from our delegation visited a chemistry class. The Iraqi students I met there were excited to talk to me about the US and about their lives as students. They seemed so hopeful. When I asked them what motivated them to keep studying when everything around them was falling apart, they said they wanted to be ready to rebuild Iraq when the sanctions were lifted. Of course, they expressed their frustration with the sanctions' impact on their academic lives. At first, this struck me as a trivial concern when compared with the abject suffering I'd witnessed that morning at the pediatric hospital—surely the lack of current scientific textbooks and journals is hardly a crisis on the scale of widespread malnutrition. The plight of the art student who has to work without paint isn't comparable to the plight of the physician who has to work without aspirin. But seeing the extent to which the sanctions affect everyday life in Iraq helped me understand the state of complete siege that Iraqis are under. The sanctions are not only responsible for starving and killing innocent Iraqi citizens, but for so demolishing the economy, infrastructure and simple routines of everyday life that the Iraqis have been disabled from perhaps ever fully rebuilding their society.

Fighting the real enemy

The United States' motivation in enforcing and maintaining the sanctions on the people of Iraq has little to do with weapons control. If the US was truly concerned about weapons proliferation, be it chemical, biological, nuclear or conventional weapons, it would have censured its allies who create these weapons and it would no longer dedicate more funds to defense spending than any other section of its own national budget.

This state of siege is not designed to force Iraq into compliance with UN regulations. Rather, it is designed to wipe out a country which threatens the United States' colonial control over the Middle East. I can't support either government in this struggle, as it's clear that Saddam Hussein has the same imperialist goals as the US. But in the struggle between the largest imperialist power in the world and a would-be world power, the people are getting squeezed out. The excuse often given when the US sends the troops in is that it's being done to protect "our way of life." That way of life is one of excessive comfort and abundant cheap goods, at the expense of downtrodden people around the world. This is known more accurately as colonialism, and the sanctions are one more tool in keeping the rest of the world below us.

I went to Iraq with well-formed objections to the sanctions: They were hitting the people rather than the government; they weren't bringing us any closer to weapons control; and they were depriving an entire nation of people of adequate food, water, and medical care. But I didn't really understand what a bold lie the United States was telling when they labeled the sanctions "a humane alternative to war." The impact of the sanctions on Iraq is exactly the same as the impact of war. People are still dying, only now it's by starvation and disease rather than by bombs. Though less immediate than traditional warfare, this is a protracted state of war and this time it's not even on the government—this time it cuts straight to the people.

With success rates like the past seven years have shown, the US has little use for traditional warfare. However, that threat is always looming. As I write, there are reports that the US has just made an air-to-land missile attack on an Iraqi water reservoir near Basra in retaliation for Iraqi radar monitoring of US planes flying over Iraq. As with the sanctions, this attack will only hurt the people—strategically taking out a crucial water supply in a country with very limited sanitary water is clearly an attack against civilians. The US policy of keeping the rest of the world subdued to protect our colonial way of life continues again with flagrant disregard for innocent life.

I recently received a letter from one of the students I met at the University of Baghdad. I'm amazed that it got to me through the postal systems of two hostile countries. Though her English is limited, she sends wishes for my health and to my family. It's never been clearer that the people of Iraq are not our enemies—they are the victim of the same forces that oppress the working class, women, and people of color here in the US. If we support the sanctions on Iraq, then the US government has tricked us into siding with corporate interests and imperialism yet again. Let's start fighting the real enemy. ©

ASSASSINATION IN

Lin "Spit" Newborn was a friendly person. It may have gotten him killed.

Newborn, 24 and Dan Shersty, 22, were both members of Las Vegas, Nevada Anti-Racist Action (ARA), a local chapter of the grass-roots direct action civil rights organization; both members of the Las Vegas Unity Skins, another group of anti-racist skinheads; and both friends.

Both were found shot dead in the desert northwest of Las Vegas over the July 4 weekend, apparently victims of a carefully planned attack by Nazi skinheads. The two may have fallen into a trap set by a still unknown woman, who asked Newborn to meet her and another woman for a date. Later that same night, Newborn and Shersty were killed, the first members of any ARA chapter ever to be murdered.

Police have no suspects in what could well be a capital murder case, but suspect racist motives.

Newborn was black. Shersty was white.

"The fact that they were black, white and friends is what got them killed," said Jerry, a spokesperson for Columbus, Ohio ARA—the de facto clearinghouse for national ARA news. "Whether or not they were members of this organization or that organization, their friendship was inherently political enough for them to be murdered."

Dan Shersty was an Airman First Class

with the 57th Aircraft Generation Squadron, an avionics mechanic responsible for the maintenance and repair of planes at nearby Nellis Air Force Base. He divided his off-duty time between sports like biking, skating and snowboarding and spending evenings listening to ska and oi and talking and drinking with friends, Newborn among them.

Lin Newborn was the "father figure" of the Unity Skins, said those who knew him. He was a gentle, caring person whose imposing appearance—besides weighing in just shy of 200lbs and standing just over 6 feet, Newborn sported a dozen piercings and an assortment of elaborate tattoos, including the name of his one-year old son, Nicodemus, in two-inch scroll across his lower back—belied his true nature. An amateur chef, Newborn dreamed of running his own restaurant. For the time being, however, he earned his share of the rent as a piercer at Tribal Body Piercing in Las Vegas.

One day in late June or early July, a woman stopped by the shop and requested a piercing. Newborn did the job. She called back on Friday, July 3, and left a message for him on Tribal's voice mail system inviting him on a date that night with herself and a friend. According to friends, Newborn and Shersty were on their way to meet them at midnight when they disappeared.

A band of all-terrain vehicle riders out for a spin through the desert off Rome Blvd. near US 95 found Dan Shersty at 8:20 next morning, sprawled on the dirt next to his car—dead. Friends say he was beaten and then shot in the side. The *Las Vegas Review Journal* reported he had been shot in the face. Las Vegas Metro Police declined to confirm any injuries beyond a fatal gunshot wound.

ARA members and Unity Skins immediately began to search for Newborn, but found nothing. The next day, as the search continued and family members, co-workers and roommates waited anxiously for word, police listed Newborn as "missing under suspicious circumstances" and renewed their own efforts. A helicopter fly-over revealed nothing new and local papers ran Metro's requests for anyone with pertinent information to get in touch.

According to Metro Homicide Sgt. Ken Hefner, on Monday, July 6, police, "went a little further and a little farther out," and found Newborn about 150 yards away from where Shersty's body had been discovered two days earlier—also shot to death.

"It was an execution, absolutely," said Jerry of Columbus ARA. "The Nazis were out to kill their opposition in that city."

VEGAS

BY CHRIS ZEIGLER



ARA members say the Las Vegas chapter—and Newborn in particular—had a history of confrontation with Nazi skinheads, some furious that an African American man would call himself a skinhead. A message uncovered by police on a Swedish skinhead web site identified “a couple of bitch ass Nazis” who were planning to attack Newborn “because he [was] a black skin.” Local ARA members told reporters and police that altercations and even full-fledged fistfights with Nazis were common.

“The racist versus the non-racist skinhead tensions appear to be the most likely [motive],” said Sgt. Hefner. “According to what we’ve heard from the non-fascist group, they’ve often had confrontations with the fascist skinheads.”

The killings weren’t just street fights gone wrong, police and activists suspect. The women who Newborn and Shersty were on their way to meet may have been “Nazi boneheads who set the activists up,” claimed ARA news reports. Neither woman has yet identified herself to police, who are still investigating their possible connection to the case.

An anonymous police source also told the *Review-Journal* that both men still had their wallets when discovered, discounting a possible monetary motive for the murders.

A week after the bodies had been found, Las Vegas Metro Homicide acknowledged that the Newborn and Shersty probably weren’t just murdered—they were assassinated.

“This is totally different than the heat of passion, even if it was just planned at the drop of a hat,” said Detective Sgt. Mike Bunker, part of the Intelligence Section of Metro’s Organized Crime Bureau. “This is much more serious than a confrontation that takes place during mutual combat.”

The killings could already merit capital punishment, Bunker said, especially if proven to be “hate related”—if the murderers were Nazis out to kill their opposition. The perpetrators also face charges of using a deadly weapon in the commission of a crime and, if Newborn and Shersty were forced, perhaps at gunpoint, out to the patch of desert where they were killed, charges of kidnapping as well.

“Obviously, this changes things,” explained Jerry of ARA Columbus. “We are going to bury our comrades, we are going to organize in Las Vegas, and we are going to show that we are not going to be intimidated.”

ARA Las Vegas already had a history of not being intimidated. Fascist and Nazi skinheads had been prowling Las Vegas for what Sgt. Bunker called “an appreciable number of years,” many originating from Southern California and Arizona.

The ARA chapter was formed approximately five months ago, in the face of what Jerry characterized as “a rising tide of fascist violence.” Las Vegas ARA was a tight-knit and tiny group of 15 to 20 people. Most were young, some were students, some were military and many were active in a local scene struggling to deal with a Nazi presence.

High school and middle school students insisted that racist skinheads had been present in their schools for years, terrorizing minorities and absorbing impressionable teens into their ranks. A state senator even reported a firefist only a short distance from his home.

According to Sen. Mike Schneider (D-Las Vegas), a carload of racist skinheads followed a black youth home to his apartment complex after an encounter at a pizza parlor, swooping in before the complex’s gates could close. When the youth got up to his apartment, the skinheads began shooting, peppering the building with bullets. While some of neighbors dialed 911, others shot back. By the time the police had shown up, an agitated crowd was milling around the courtyard and, Schneider estimates, some twenty rounds had been fired.

“The public is really shocked that this is going on,” Schneider said. “We don’t fit this type of crime.”



A MESSAGE UNCOVERED BY POLICE ON A SWEDISH SKINHEAD WEB SITE IDENTIFIED "A COUPLE OF BITCH ASS NAZIS" WHO WERE PLANNING TO ATTACK NEWBORN "BECAUSE HE [WAS] A BLACK SKIN."

But Nevada ACLU director Gary Peck disagrees, discounting views that cast Las Vegas as too dynamic and too rich to be racist.

"[Las Vegas] isn't the Disneyland devoid of race problems that the gaming industry would have you believe," he said. "Based on the kind of reports we receive, intolerance, bigotry, and hatred are all on the rise, and all of that is consistent with nationwide trends."

Reported hate crimes in Las Vegas have been in a three year decline, according to Sgt. Bunker. But just because acts by such groups aren't reported, he said, doesn't mean they aren't present—and a police department with finite resources and time can't always afford to go out looking for them.

"[These] groups, when they have a confrontation, are not likely to want to bring this to the attention of the authorities," Sgt. Bunker explained. "If the victim doesn't say anything, has a crime taken place?" he asked. "Yes, but how do we hear about it?"

Las Vegas ARA members were operating in a scene where police were often neither present nor welcome. Able to directly identify and confront local fascists, they dealt with problems on their own. "[There are] things we can find out that the police probably never will," explained Jerry of Columbus ARA.

For months, the Las Vegas ARA worked to establish a presence in the Nevada punk scene, passing out information at shows, setting up a web page and, not infrequently, butting heads with their opposition. Their movement was growing.

But now Newborn and Shersty are dead, stunning the local chapter and sending at least one member, fearful for his own safety and the safety of his family, into hiding. Though the nascent ARA chapter had weathered its share of name calling and street brawling, no one had expected an execution—not there, not then.

"Perhaps we're too critical of our work," confesses Jerry of Columbus ARA, "we didn't consider ourselves worth shooting. But now that we know we are, we're going to look at things a bit differently."

Few new developments have surfaced in the weeks since Newborn and Shersty were murdered. Police have turned to the Internet for possible clues to the killers, scouring Nazi message boards for any incriminating bragging. ARA members declined to comment on the status of their own independent investigation, but remain largely optimistic about the eventual disposition of the case.

"We're a civil rights organization, not a gang," Jerry explained. "We're not in the revenge business. It's the police's job to get these murdering Nazi bastards off the street."

Efforts to rebuild and regroup go on even as members of Las Vegas ARA mourn Newborn and Shersty. A memorial service for Shersty was held on July 10 at Nellis AFB. ARA held a national press conference July 18, the day of Newborn's funeral. Local television stations showed up at the service but skipped the press conference.

A rally will be held in Las Vegas on August 29. ARA chapters nationwide are organizing fundraisers to help support Newborn's one year old son. Moon Ska and Epitaph Records have both expressed interest in sponsoring a benefit concert sometime this fall.

Lin Newborn, say other Unity Skins, often quoted keyboardist Jerry Dammers of The Specials: "It is not enough to be anti-racist yourself. You have to be a positive anti-racist. You have to stand against it, because otherwise nothing changes." Newborn took a stand and paid the ultimate price. But Las Vegas ARA is determined to survive. ©

Donations may be sent to Las Vegas ARA, POB 29057, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89126-3057.

Contact ARA Columbus for information about rallies and fundraisers at (614) 424-9074.

Anyone with information about the case may call Las Vegas Metro Police Homicide Division at (702) 229-3521.

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COMPOSITION
Punk 101

By Marc Bayard

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About two years ago an idea came to me—

an idea I wasn't even sure if I could pull off. My vision was to bring punk into the classroom; to teach punk, as I cared for it—as a movement for positive social and cultural change—in a school setting. Could punk fit into academia? Even if it could, would academia let it? I had to find out.

This past January, my plan came together. I began teaching a course on punk at Tufts University, a college just outside of Boston, entitled "Punk: A Cultural, Social and Political History of Resistance" (I admit, it was a pretty lofty title). As far as I know, the class was the first of its kind.

The initial problem I found with explaining punk to a non-punk audience, let alone fellow academics, was that they didn't know *anything* about the subject. If they did, it was only a vague image of Johnny Rotten and the Pistols or as a destructive force because of a host of media half-truths. I'd be the first to admit that if these images were all that punk was, then it wouldn't be worth academic study—or any of my time.

Dispelling these misrepresentations of punk was one of the main reason I wanted to teach this course in the first place. The stereotypes that parents, television and the media fostered had to be countered. The Pistols may have been important to punk, but were they really worth dozens and dozens of lousy academic and music book written about them? Punk as both music and a movement did not end with them and then pop up again some thirteen years later in Seattle as some music historians would have the general public believe. This course would be essential just to get that basic point across. But the course was about so much more than the music, which has always tended to overshadow all the other brilliant aspects of punk.

"As passionate as I am about punk, much of it is flawed. I wasn't going in as an apologist for punk. I wanted to layout the truth: the good, the bad and the ugly."

Allotted one semester, my intent was to generate an undergraduate course that really did justice to the movement that we all know as punk. In taking a critical look at the punk scene some serious question immediately began to arise. What does punk truly mean to punks? What impact has the movement had on the state of the world? How does it stack up to other counter-cultural movements of years past? And, of course, does punk still matter in 1998? Ideally I was charged with answering these questions and others. The only thing I knew going in was that it was going to be fun to uncover the results.

To begin answering those questions, I spent months traveling the country and some time in the UK talking with and interviewing a number of punks as to their opinions on the course. Many of these had done in-depth research (they lived it) on a number of specific topics that I would only get to cover on the surface at best. Putting together this class was one of the most amazing examples of the punk community coming together for a project that I've ever been involved with. The assistance I received as well as the phenomenal support and access to resources greatly aided my research and the class itself.

How does one condense the energy, the hope, the potential that is punk into a weekly frame work? Topics for the course attempted to portray the rich and unique cultural, political, historical and social elements of punk primarily as they occurred in the US and Europe. This was no small order given the fact that there was some close to thirty years of history depending on how one chooses to date the birth of punk. My desire was to present an objective view of our movement. As passionate as I am about punk, much of it is flawed. I wasn't going in as an apologist for punk. I wanted to layout the truth: the good, the bad and the ugly.

For the last thirteen years, I've been raised on punk. I'm 27 now and have seen quite a bit in that time. Originally from Boston, I now reside in Washington, DC. Both scenes have helped shape my view of what punk is and could be. Many of the more enlightened aspects of the movement, from vegetarianism to the beliefs in egalitarianism, have helped to solidify many of my life decisions. Punk to me is no longer a look, musical style, or regional clique but instead an adjective used to describe anything positive and authentic. In many ways I felt I owed it to punk to see this course through and to not short change anyone some of the experience I had received.

Each week the course spotlighted a different aspect of our multi-layered scene. Topics included the History of the American and British Punk; Punk Rock Music and Its Role in the Movement; The Politics of Punk; Vegetarianism and the Environmental Movement; Feminism and Women in Punk; Drug Culture in the Punk Scene; and The Future of Punk. We all know that if you put 100 punks in a room you'll get 100 opinions, the same idea translated in the classroom setting. New ideas and debates flowed from each week's discussions. The challenge was to steer the class, move debate and to present a solid overview of some-times complex topics.

Much of the class discussion was fueled by the course readings. While the last few years have seen a huge increase in books written about punk, many have been photo books and most of the ones with text have been pretty bad. The texts I used in the class were some of the best out there including *England's Dreaming* by Jon Savage, *Get In*

the Van by Henry Rollins, *The Philosophy of Punk* by Craig O'Hara, and *Angry Women of Rock* by various authors and *From the Velvets to the Voidoids* by Clinton Heylin. These works along with vaults and vaults of zines dating back to the early '80s provided the background to draw from in developing and selecting the reading that truly gave the movement some real teeth. In the end, I ended up developing a six hundred page reading packet as well as assigning five text books for the course.

Visual aids were also quite important. I believed that visual aids and film documentaries were essential in capturing the spirit of the movement and giving my students a sense of who were some of the prime movers and shakers in the scene both past and present. With that I tried to show as much video footage as I felt was appropriate to get certain themes across. Among the films that were shown in the classroom were classics such as *Another State of Mind* and *Decline of Western Civilization*. Other films that captured newer aspects of the scene included *Radical Act* and *Bikini Kill Toured the UK: It Changed My Life*. Various footage of interviews on topics such as skinheads, community and communication and media misrepresentation were also shown as well as a mainstream PBS documentary on punk and news footage on straightedge.

Even with all the reading, films and discussions, I knew that it was important to expose the class to first hand accounts of punk in action. I figured the best way of doing that was by bringing in guest speakers. My goal with guest speakers was to bring in the best mix of punk's knowledge and creativity into my classroom.

Rounding up the guest speakers reminded me of the years I spent setting up shows. Getting dates set up and arranging lodging was all part of the adrenaline rush. The culmination of the course came in the tenth week when Mark Andersen of Positive Force DC and Gee Vaucher (G.Sus) of Crass about how punk as a community had developed over time in both the US and in the UK. Mark Andersen, a longtime activist and punk as well as author of *Dance of Days* (a forthcoming history of the DC scene), was well versed in the promise of punk to make change in the States and his own District of Columbia. Gee, a member of the legendary punk band Crass, had helped to set the standard for peace punks, anarchist punks, animal liberationists and many artists, painters and writers with her efforts.

That particular session, entitled "Community and Communication," was one of the most educational events I had the chance to witness in recent years. Gee explained that Crass's music was simply a backdrop to a whole new revolutionary way of acting and thinking. The message was developed to get people motivated. I also found that Gee offered up one of the most succinct definitions of punk I had ever heard when she stated "that the duty of punk was to subvert the status quo." This simple statement encompassed the message I attempted to portray for an entire semester.

Other guest speakers included Steve Blush of *Seconds* magazine and soon to be author of the forthcoming book *American Hardcore*, Al Quint of *Suburban Voice*, Hank Peirce former rodie for Uniform Choice and Slapshot and soon to be a Unitarian Universalist minister, Jodi Buonanno

don't fuck it up and if someone else is than do something about it. Its these intangibles that bind punks together who have never met or spoken. Its these beliefs that are expressed in our music and culture. Its these things that make us stay involved.

I learned a lot from my students. Each week was a give and take between all of us. One thing I quickly learned from them was that punk was still important to the young. It may be different; it may not be as good as the salad days; it may sometimes be commercial as hell but it's still punk and it's important. That lesson gave me hope that punk and the ideas behind the movement will long outlive any "sell out" band or pop trend. The baton of punk, if there is such a thing, can be passed down. My greatest thrill was the realization that my class appreciated being in the course as much as I enjoyed teaching it.

So enough with the love in, you want to know if the students got graded. Yeah they did. Figuring out how to grade the students was difficult because I realized that grades are a very unpunk concept, yet they are a necessity in academia. The bulk of the course work was a written paper—essentially a book review comparing various authors of punk works and their main points to major themes in the course. Class participation was also a major facet of the course. The students lead discussion each week. There was also a sociology paper based on either interviewing a punk or attending a show. While it may sound like a strange thing to do, this assignment really allowed for some great critical analysis of the scene and its many pluses and minuses. When you take your eyes off the stage and really examine what's taking place, you would be surprised by what you

Sometimes we all forget that in many ways our movement is a leap of faith. A belief that life matters so don't fuck it up and if someone else is than do something about it.

of the band Secret Stars, Tina Spangler of *Femme Flick* and Daisy Rooks, straight edge diva. They highlighted various aspects of the movement with particular emphasis on the early days of US hardcore and British punk as well as an analysis of women's and feminism's role in a somewhat male-dominated punk scene. The ideas and concepts these people contributed to the course made the true spirit and energy of punk come alive more than any book or film ever could. Others who lent greatly to the course in terms of ideas, critique and sweat equity included Sharon Cheslow and Justin Kollar.

The real key to the course, however, was something I had little control over: the students. I had no idea what to expect on the first day of class. I was terrified of walking into a classroom filled with Green Day, Rancid and Nirvana fans. I frankly wasn't sure that I could deal a class of "alternative" college students who loved ska or whatever the next latest trend may be. Frankly, I could barely deal with college students when I was one of them! But when I entered the class room that first week I was pleasantly surprised by what I encountered.

I ended up with 17 of the most intriguing and hardworking students anyone could dare to ask for. Some of my students were punks, others were not—it really didn't matter in the long run. What mattered was their interest to learn and their will to expand their knowledge beyond the self-imposed barriers they had created. This is all that I wanted from them and is exactly what I received.

We spent a great deal of time debating and trying to understand the themes, culture and nuances of punk. Much of it despite all the books, speakers and reasoning was a leap of faith. Sometimes we all forget that in many ways our movement is a leap of faith. A belief that life matters so

see—try it sometime. Lastly, there was a final take home exam that was based on the concepts and major themes of the course.

Were some themes of punk culture not represented in the course? Probably. It would have been improbable that any one course could cover every aspect of punk. Also when arranging any concept into categories, efforts have to be made to create comprehensive yet comprehensible fits. If the course had been conceived by someone else, other themes may have been greater emphasized. My bias was towards the most creative, energetic and social aspects of the movement, others may favor the more artistic or even decadent parts of punk.

The course is over now, I'm no longer teaching at Tufts and I've moved back to Washington DC to work for the AFL-CIO. Would I teach the class again? My quick answer is no. My justification is similar to how I view punk and many of the great punk bands: It's all about bursts of energy and being in the moment. Great bands were the ones that put out a few records then broke up leaving fans wishing for more. This course fulfilled my desires in many ways and I am proud of what was accomplished. The class did what I set out for it to do. It moved beyond punk as a musical genre and created a foundation with which to look at the belief systems and motivations behind punk as a movement. I do hope that more teachers and colleges, as they learn that it is a legitimate realm of study, will start teaching courses on punk as well as other countercultures. But for now, I'm taking a hiatus from teaching any future punk courses, but one can never say never... ©



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REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE

by Megan Shaw

The lone warrior pulls his coat tightly around his guns as he approaches the crowded room. He has planned carefully for his revenge on the people who have made him feel like an outcast. He has carefully chosen, loaded and polished his armaments. He has said his goodbyes to his loved ones, if he has any left. If his family at home is among the enemy, he will have dispatched them before he embarks on this mission. If he has been rejected by a woman, he will be aiming at her. He goes to where the enemy is most densely concentrated. He steps into the throng of people, and shoots. He manages to take a few enemies out before he is tackled by the crowd. Police handcuff him and shove him into the back of a car and he is carried away amidst a scream of sirens. As he is escorted into juvenile detention, and he is besieged by reporters wanting to know why a teenager has just gone to school and murdered his classmates.

Over the last year, variations of this scenario have played themselves out among white high schoolers in suburban America. The crowded public places they have gone to find their targets have been their schools, and the families they have taken care of first have been their parents. When Kipland Kinkel, the sixth shooter in this string of killings, opened fire in his high school cafeteria in Springfield, Oregon on May 21, the event focused national media attention on the combination of "kids, schools and guns." Characterized as a "bloody chapter in the recent history of America's high schools," it was linked immediately with a series of other similar killings that had taken place recently in Arkansas, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Mississippi. These events have been reported and analyzed repeatedly, every reporter in the nation has weighed in about "schoolyard shootings," "kids and guns," "kids and violence," "violence at school," and "antisocial kids." The news reporting has largely focused on the fact that the shootings happened in high schools, all but ignoring the fact that all the shootings have happened in white communities and completely overlooking the domestic aspects of these crimes—two of which involved parenticide and two of which involved murders of shooters' girlfriends. To focus on where they happened, more than on who the shooters are and who their victims were, obscures a number of elements that all of these murders have in common, and clouds the understanding of why they are happening.

What Does Being White Have to Do With It?

Like the United States, Japan has experienced a number of recent incidents of violence among students in public schools. There have been three killings and 54 knife-related incidents in schools since January. Japan and the United States may not have a lot in common culturally, but they do share the trait of containing relatively (on a global scale) wealthy and privileged populations. Within populations of wealth and privilege, there tend to be rigid socioeconomic structures that create pressure on the individuals within them. The personal success, wealth, and prosperity that can theoretically be attained within a privileged group is enormous. So people within such groups who perceive themselves to be underprivileged or unsuccessful may experience themselves as rejected and disempowered at a level that is disproportionate to what would be experienced by someone in similar circumstances within a less privileged society. This may be true of Japan in general, as it is a relatively homogenous society, but in America it is especially true among whites, our country's most privileged group. This may be a clue as to why the six killings that have commanded so much public attention have all happened in white communities.

People who experience disempowerment and rejection, even within a commu-

nity of privilege, lose a sense of self-worth and gain an interest in expressing their hostility towards others through violence. Any cultural archetype that offers a mix of self-destructive, glamorous, and antisocial behavior capped off by a potentially suicidal trajectory can be extremely attractive.

For women, the archetype of thinness can provide these options. Commonly found among young women from privileged, white families, anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are disorders that enable them to gain some drastic control over their life circumstances. The social image of glamour that accompanies drastic thinness is extremely appealing to young women, especially those who feel personally trapped by the high achievement expectations that accompany privileged lives. Because this glamour, when followed to its ultimate conclusion, can end in death for the anorexic and a lifetime of guilt and grief for those who surround her, it is a very effective way for women to express self-hatred and hatred of those around them in a way that is violent in the sense that it is physically damaging. It is rare for this disorder to be found among non-whites, because the type of destructiveness that it represents is fairly unique to individuals who feel ensnared and powerless within a web of privilege.

For men in such circumstances, the American mythology of the "lone warrior" is a very attractive way to empower themselves. The lone warrior is a cultural motif that is widely portrayed in American literature and legend. Lone warrior mythology is rooted in a particularly white understanding of America's origin. We are a country explored and navigated by lone European men who went into the wilderness and conquered it, or so the popular myths and public education tells us. As our society grew to fill the territory conquered by those men, their warrior tradition survived in the stories of warriors who went abroad to war to protect the rights and freedoms of those at home. The myth of the lone warrior relies on an understanding of American history that is filtered through the experience of the conquering European whites. Naturally, whites are more predisposed than other groups to reinterpreting this history and understanding it as their own.

As described in James William Gibson's book *Warrior Dreams*, the subcultures that revolve around hunting for sport, playing paintball, and reading *Soldier of Fortune* are some of the socially acceptable ways that warrior mythology is expressed. For people who have fantasies of violence to express, this subculture is a comfortable piece of American culture to which to belong. It is understandable how the trappings of warrior mythology—guns, ammunition, stories of bold revenge—are very attractive to people who are looking for a culturally valued context within which to express violence. Discovering an interest in weapons and building a sense of self that draws on the lone warrior myth presents a model for the expression of violence that is strongly reinforced by history and by contemporary popular culture.

Just like women, men who are entrapped and enraged are interested in identifying ways of relating to the world that are violent and self-destructive while allowing them to assume, at least temporarily, a mantle of personal glamour. Assuming a lone warrior persona is a way to identify with the countless gun-wielding vengeful assassins of film and television who are popular icons of masculinity. Additionally, becoming skilled with armaments is a talent that has broad cache as an attribute of masculinity. Combined, these skills and identities can create a sense of empowerment for men who desperately need it, and also provide them with a mechanism of self-destruction and violence toward others. The lone warrior takes the law into his own hands to get vengeance on those who have wronged him. It is understandable how this combination is powerfully attractive for white men who perceive themselves as entrapped and rejected. While not all of the six shooters involved in the recent killings have had observable wealth, the fact that they are white places them

To focus on where they happened, more than on who the shooters are and who their victims were, obscures a number of elements that all of these murders have in common, and clouds the understanding of why they are happening.

in a context of privilege. Within that context, the circumstances of low income and social alienation can create a powerful climate of entrapment and disempowerment.

When surrounded by a community that is comparatively affluent, an individual who feels entrapped, rejected, or otherwise disempowered experiences those feelings in isolation. They have few ways to express their anger and outrage within the context of a group. This is why such expressions of violence as anorexia and lone warrior behavior tend to arise primarily within white communities: As patterns of aggression they are ideally suited to isolated individuals.

"What's Wrong With This Country Is Its Public Schools!"

The fact that schools have been the primary sites of these killings has taken on a strong significance in the public understanding of the killings—an understanding dictated almost exclusively by the media. In Springfield, Oregon, the newspaper created a graphic icon to identify articles that relate to the killings perpetrated by Kip Kinkel. That icon is an image of a sniper aiming at a schoolhouse within a red, slashed circle. This graphic icon symbolizes the community's tragedy in spite of the fact that fully half the killing that Kinkel did was in his own home and half his fatal victims were his immediate family members.

News reports of the six shootings anchor the events within the intersection between adolescence and high school. This intersection is the home of an established American tradition of teenage transgression. In the 1955 film *Age 13*, a boy who is in grief over his mother's death takes a gun to school and fires at classmates in the playground as one of many ways he expresses his social disorientation. No one is injured, and the intervention of friendly therapists helps him on his way. In real life, historical accounts of schoolyard shootings go back as far as the 1890s, and there were numerous schoolyard shootings in the 1990s prior to the recent spate. But these incidents weren't grouped as closely together in time, and therefore didn't prompt the kind of public hysteria that we are currently experiencing.

In the '90s public schools have been at the center of a number of social issues. The right wing interest in "ending big government" has included the effort to win political support for home schooling and vouchers that would use public funds to pay for private schools. The popularity and marketability of this conservative stance against public education rely on exploring and publicizing a view of public schools as unsafe for children. This view is expressed ideologically when the Christian Right argues that the teaching of evolution is damaging to Christian values. This view is expressed politically when conservatives argue that bilingual education prevents children from learning the English they need to function in society. Characterizing the shootings as "school violence" introduces the idea that schools are physically unsafe, as well as ideologically and politically dangerous. This idea is consistent with a diminishing understanding of public schools as neutral and safe spaces. However, it doesn't address the real reason the shootings happened where they did.

Simply put, adults who go on shooting sprees go wherever they find the people they wish to hurt. When they wish to hurt their peers and their families, they go to where they can find those people. Because adults work instead of attend high school, such killings can happen anywhere that the peers and families of the violently enraged people work: the post office, office buildings, county fairs and homes.

These killings are described as "school violence" simply because that's where people of the age the killers have been can be most easily found, not because high schools are necessarily more dangerous places than adult work places.

Two weeks after the shootings in Springfield, a "Community Gathering for Hope and Healing" was convened by Springfield pastors at the school where Kinkel killed his classmates. Convening 1,200 people inside the school, the focus of that event was a Christian invocation of adults in the community to support the traumatized children. A city council member said, "Squeeze an orange and you'll get orange juice; squeeze a lemon and you'll get lemon juice. But let a crisis put the squeeze on the community of Springfield and the spirit of God comes out." The way the local Christian community rallied around the schoolchildren at the school was moving, but it deemphasized the murders of Kinkel's parents. The community, like the nation, has focused on the school as the focus of the violence, to the exclusion of the home.

Help Me, Mama

People who experience entrapment and rejection on an individual basis rather than a group basis may experience the people closest to them as the only enemy they know. It is therefore not surprising that the targets selected by the six shooters were not entirely random. Some were, but others were frighteningly precise in their aim at the people with whom the killers were most intimate. Luke Woodham of Pearl, Mississippi killed, among others, his mother and his ex-girlfriend. Mitchell Johnson of Jonesboro, Arkansas killed, among others, his ex-girlfriend. And Kip Kinkel killed, among others, both of his parents.

Contextualizing these killings within the simple categorization of "school violence" is not only easy but given the currently hostile climate surrounding public schools, it is also convenient. To look at other characteristics that these killings share is to raise questions that are not so easy to respond to with politically marketable campaigns, such as the campaign for school vouchers. Domestic violence is not an issue that feeds into any current mass hysteria, and is therefore not a sexy media angle. Parent-killing, in particular, is an unusual expression of domestic violence, and when more common forms of domestic violence are publicly downplayed and unexplored, it is not surprising that this aspect of the recent shootings is given little notice.

The Menendez brothers did for parent-killing what the O.J. Simpson case did for spousal abuse: They sensationalized it into a celebrity event. When such crimes are committed among people who are wealthy enough to be considered beyond the reach of the social pressures of middle America, the crimes become spectacles for public consumption—horrible entertainment. Because those crimes took place among the upper classes, they did not even spark, much less catalyze, much public awareness of the social forces that create and sustain the conditions in which domestic violence thrives.

Parenticide is an uncommon crime because most people have long since left their parents' homes by the time their hostility toward the outside world grows murderously violent. When high schoolers threaten and kill their par-

Obviously far more factors are at work in these killings than poorly understood incidents of domestic violence and entrapped suburban white kids. But it is important to look at them because they clearly illustrate ignored patterns within cycles of violence.

ents, they are doing what adults do when they threaten and kill their spouses. In both situations, the killers are striking at their most immediate families, the people who they see every day and who therefore are the easiest targets for their hostility toward the world to build around.

Boys Against Girls

Like most instigators of domestic violence, the teen killers have all been men, including four who specifically targeted female victims. In Arkansas, Mitchell Johnson killed three girls and a female teacher in addition to his ex-girlfriend; in Kentucky, Michael Carneal killed three girls standing in a prayer circle; in Mississippi Luke Woodham killed his ex-girlfriend, his mother and another girl. When adult male killers target women, those murders are considered violence against women, no matter where they take place. Characterizing these killings as "school violence," rather than as violence against women, is doing a disservice to the victims.

Adult men who inflict domestic violence on their female partners have been tested to have low self-esteem and constant feelings of powerlessness. One of the few treatments for male domestic violence offenders that is proven to reduce recidivism is teaching them courses in assertiveness. This finding by social researchers is consistent with the idea that self-perception of disempowerment would predispose someone to adopting a lone warrior persona. For adult perpetrators of domestic violence, wife- or girlfriend-beating is usually an end result of a long struggle by a man for control over the immediate circumstances of his life. If a younger man who goes to high school and still lives with his parents is struggling for such control, the natural targets of violence are the people who are the mechanisms of his frustration. The women who have rejected him are targeted because they have become iconic of his social alienation; his parents are targeted because they are the most immediate causes of his personal disempowerment.

In Montreal in 1989, a male university student in engineering was frustrated that he wasn't performing well at school and took a gun to class. He asked the women to stand separate from the men, and shot and killed fourteen women. He expressed frustration that women were taking over the engineering department and creating less room for male students to succeed. He set the precedent for men to come to school, isolate women as the object of murderous rage and frustration, and shoot them. The younger American men who targeted their ex-girlfriends have not articulated such rationales for their rage, but then they simply are not old enough for women to have come to symbolize professional as well as personal rejection.

By using gender-neutral terms such as "adolescents," "teens," and "kids," instead of "male shooters" and "female victims," the killings have been reported in such a way as to focus attention on the ages of the players in the tragedies, rather than the genders. By ignoring the gender dynamics between killers and victims, public awareness of the killings as crimes against women is diffused. To characterize the killings as crimes of young men against their mothers, against their ex-girlfriends, against randomly targeted girls and to a lesser extent against randomly targeted boys, would open analysis of the crimes to a perspective of why, in scenarios of domestic violence, most perpetrators are men and most victims are women. Such an analysis would open questions about sexism that our society is not eager to answer, and would distract from the blame placed on the "dangerous" public sphere.

Kids...

One reason the six shootings have been so hard for the adult public to accept and understand is that adults expect teenagers to appreciate adolescence as a time of low demand and high reward. Once on the other side of the generation gap and saddled with the responsibilities of earning wages and supporting families, it is hard for adults to see the social pressure of adolescence as a confining environment. Because they are deeply enmeshed within the experience of their own pressures, they are less sympathetic to the stresses of high school years. They may not recognize those years as a time that fosters a deep-rooted sense of placelessness in society

among those who feel they do not have peer approval. This ambivalence toward adolescents on the part of adults prompts them to react to crimes perpetrated by adolescents much more severely than they would react to similar actions performed by members of a different age group.

A week or two after Kip Kinkel killed his parents, a father in Ohio killed his five-year-old twins with an axe. A comparatively grisly crime to Kip Kinkel's murder of his parents, it was perpetrated by a parent on defenseless children. Yet the media coverage of this event was fractional compared to the coverage of the Kinkel killings. This suggests that adult society may tend to swallow its own atrocities, while excessively demonizing the atrocities of youth.

Adolescence is a broader social category even than ethnicity. The media, politicians, "concerned parent groups" and other adults don't tend even to distinguish class or ethnicity amongst teens as a group. When the category "teen" supersedes even race and class in its breadth, it loses its capacity to meaningfully describe any group of people. And yet Americans have recently been asking many questions about what to do about "kids and guns." We might as well simply ask what to do about ourselves as Americans. "Kids" is not very meaningful, while gun-related violence is culturally defining of America as a whole.

...And Guns

There has been a lot of public criticism of the availability of guns to adolescents. But in Japan, where guns are not readily available, there have been numerous incidents of violence in which public school students have brought knives to school and stabbed and killed their teachers and classmates. Of course it is easier to kill someone with a gun than with a knife, and therefore certainly more deaths have resulted from the American crimes than would be the case if knives had been used. But the fact that comparable phenomena occur both in Japan and in the United States suggests that removing guns from public access would not solve the greater problem. Plus, when Luke Woodham went to school and shot his ex-girlfriend and another student, he had already killed his mother at home—he had stabbed her with a knife. To report these crimes as a "deadly combination of kids and guns" shifts focus away from questions of social pressures and individual motivations, and toward a question of gun control. Gun control is a real issue, but it's an issue that is not necessarily central to these crimes.

Men who develop a lone warrior identity and take gun-wielding, vengefully violent action against those who they feel have rejected or oppressed them are certainly jumping into an American sub culture of gun worship, and people are dying as a result. But the reasons that they are assuming those identities have more to do with the same kinds of pressures that drive school students to knife one another in Japan than with the simple seduction of guns. Is anyone asking of Japan what to do about "kids and knives"? Using the six school shootings to open a discussion about gun control is as productive as raising the question of "kids and knives" in Japan. In short, it only leads us away from the deeper issues at hand.

The question asked after each incident of violence has been a simple one: Why? The answer, offered up by the media and other self-described "experts" has been equally as simple: "kids, guns and school." But when the focus of the recent spate of shootings in schools is narrowed to the intersection of adolescence, guns, and school, many facets of the events are ignored that are more complex than can easily be publicly analyzed. Obviously far more factors are at work in these killings than poorly understood incidents of domestic violence, and entrapped suburban white kids. But it is important to look at them because they clearly illustrate ignored patterns within cycles of violence. These patterns are not comfortably discussed because they do not service the dialogue about the place of public schools in a shrinking public sphere. And they are not discussed because they raise questions that have no easy answers about the roles that social isolation, misogyny and disempowerment play in perpetrating violence. Until these issues are discussed—and more importantly, confronted and solved—the killing will continue. ©

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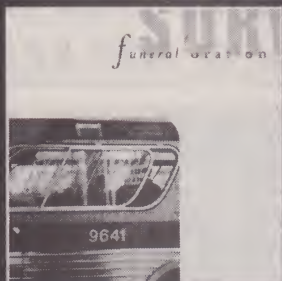
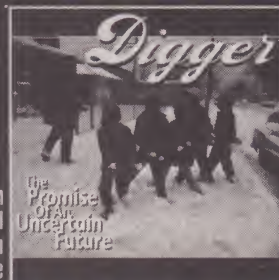
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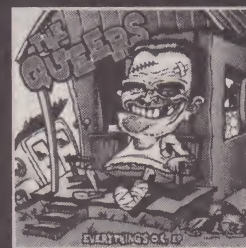
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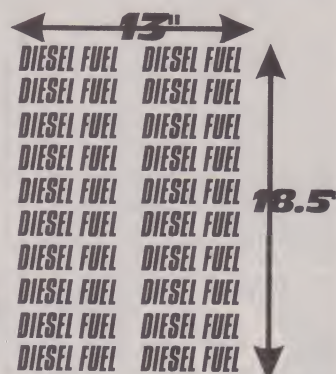
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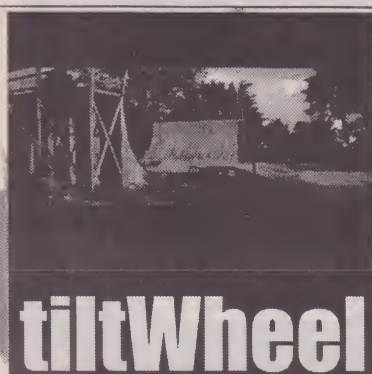
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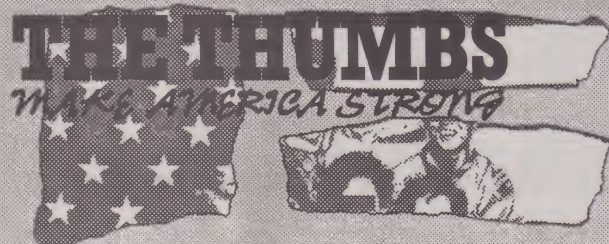
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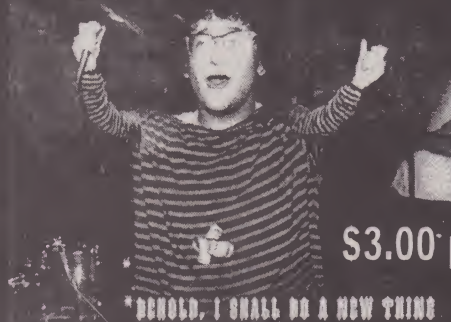
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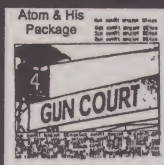
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Mai, Soixante-Huit

By Eric Boehme

Thirty years ago, workers and students came together on the streets all over France, managing to nearly overthrow the world's third-largest capitalist government. Later that year, "the whole world was watching" in Chicago as millions of people voiced their opposition to the US government. This is 10 minutes in the lives of two of those people...

I pinch my eyes tight to see through my tears. Even through my bandana, I can smell the bitter, acrid stench. They just shot three more canisters, spinning and puffing deadly plumes in and around the scattering crowd. Coughing uncontrollably, my breath comes in ragged spurts. Each gulp sears my throat, making it difficult to gingerly lift my rucksack. Three petrol-filled bottles clink dangerously together as I settle the pack on my back.

—Mon Dieu, nous devons prendre cette rue!

—On y va!

I feel the heat surging from the burning Mercedes; factory-fresh not minutes before, now the overturned underside writhing and squirming in burning, jellied flames, licking up and around the still spinning wheels. I see three black-clothed figures duck off the

street, just in front of a bristle of plastic shields and helmets. I turn to run and see the last figure stumble over a can of flaming refuse. One more glance as Jerome pulls me over the remains of the hastily constructed barricade. I recognize the woman through the swarm of falling batons. We once had coffee near the Sacre-Coeur and spoke of the communards and the strategic advantage of that particular hill. She disappears in a hall of boots and batons.

Running south on the Boulevard Saint-Michel into a fresh breeze, the tears let up a little. I can finally see. Catching a glimpse of Jerome's face, swollen and red from the gas, I gasp in spite of myself. Three large lumps stretch black and blue from his two-day bearded chin to his ear-rubber bullets-fuckin' gendamerie. A sideways glance and he busts me watching him. He smiles faintly and quickly caresses my face.

—Regarde vite! Casse toi! Courts!

We scatter from the rest of the group, running harder now, breathing deeper, tingling scared, laughing nervously. Broken windows, screams of delight, pain, anger, smoke and fire born by whispering tear-gassed breezes, running...

—OK... Stop... Allons 'a cette banque...

—Ouais, ouais... D'accord... Allons y!

Jerome lifts the backpack off my shoulders. His hands tremble as he unzips the pack. I reach down inside with both hands, take a quick look around and lift two bottles over my head in a quick triumphant gesture. My nostrils fill with the smell of petrol. The last

bottle rests on its side in the bot- —Jerome?
tom of the pack. Reaching into the —Hein?
pack, Jerome and I brush hands. —C'est drolle mais... c'est dur!
Our eyes meet momentarily and —Mon Dieu, Emmanuel... Qu'est
we crack up, giggling nervously. I ce qui se passe."
hit him in the chest, gently pushing
him back and lift the last bottle.

—OK... Un... Deux... Trois!

One bottle, another, and another sail through the smoky air crashing in succession through the windows of the bank. Faint booms echo from within the darkened building, smoke curling up, pouring out and around the window shards, flames creeping and climbing the sides of the walls. Running again, legs churning, heat warming the backs of our black, soot-encrusted jeans, fear coursing, pounding through my head, stumbling, blinded, laughing...

He unbuttons my shirt and lightly touches my erect nipples. Quickly he unbuckles my jeans and pulls them down around my

thighs. I'm on my knees peering over the edge of the roof, now laughing harder, laughing louder. Sirens bounce echoes through the street as I feel Jerome's warm hands on my hips. I smell smoke and gasoline. Across the street, the batik explodes in an orange, glassy ball of flame as thick clouds of dirty smoke billow from the roof. His body warms my back, the fiery bank warms my face and chest— smiling, gasping for breath, laughing... Jerome enters me. ©

—Ce son est merveilleux.

—Je sais... Je sais.

I follow Jerome through the open door, legs pumping to mount the staircase. Spiraling upward. I gulp quick breaths trying to keep up with Jerome disappearing above me. Seven flights of stairs, panting, exhausted, we kick open the door to the roof and stumble out. Smoke whispers up from two different sides of the street. We crouch and run to tile edge, squatting down to peer over the waist-high wall ringing the roof. Flames engulf the bank as police surge down from the Boulevard Saint-Michel barricades. Helpless, they back away from the heat and mill about aimlessly. By now, I am laughing. Hard. Uncontrollably. My head swims. Too tired to stop moving, coughing and sneezing out the last of the tear-gas, my stomach hurts from laughing.



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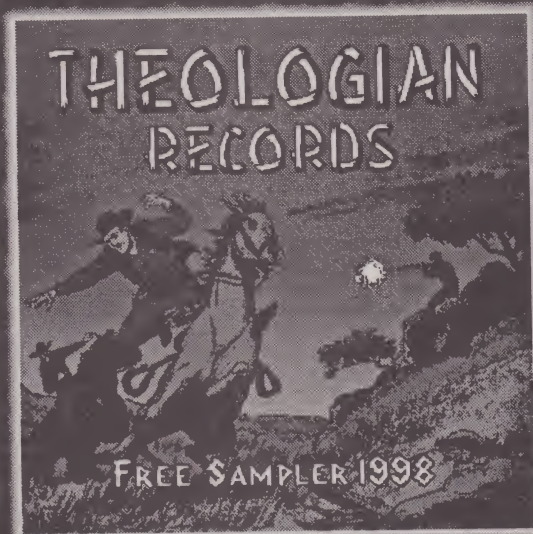
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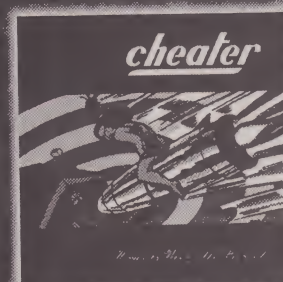
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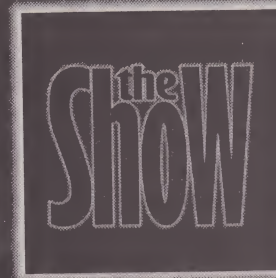
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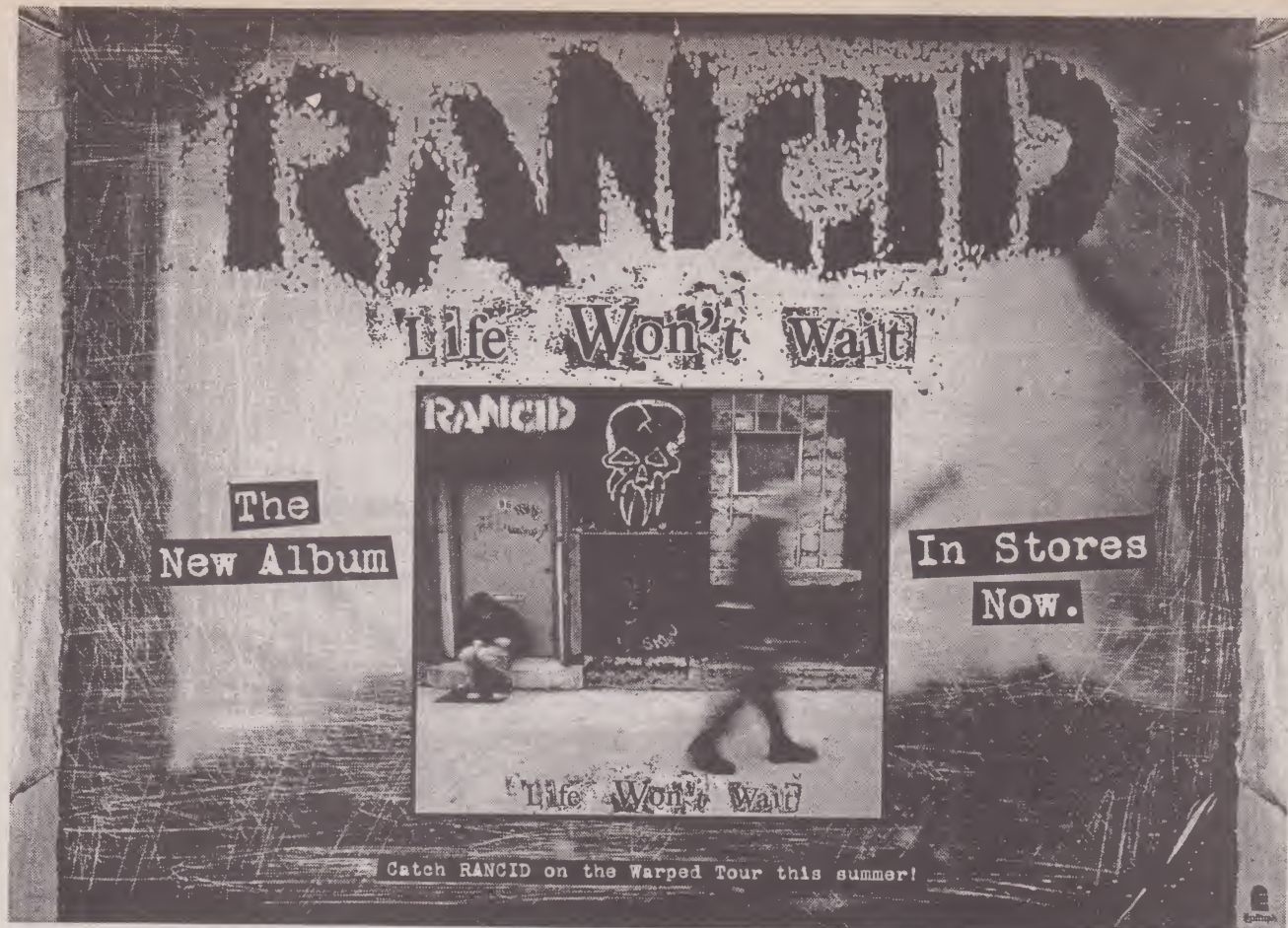
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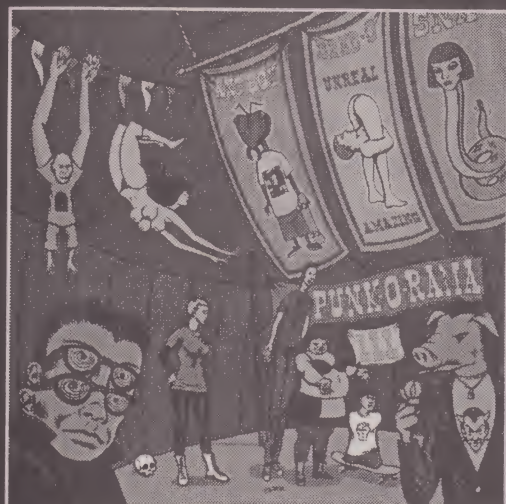
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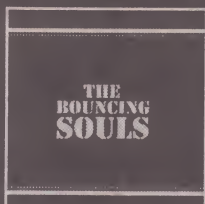
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THE FILES

V

How to get a Vasectomy

or how to be a good boy and have yourself neutered.

By John Gerkin

In this article, references to sex refer, for the most part, to boy/girl intercourse because that is the only way for pregnancy to occur by accident. There are many other ways to have sex/fuck/make love/be intimate. I encourage you to explore them, partly to reduce chances of pregnancy and partly because we could all use more good sex in our lives.

GET FAMILIAR WITH IT

Have you ever held menses in your hand? Ever tasted menstrual blood? Boys, have you ever tasted your own cum? I know, I know, all that stuff is yucky and icky and it tastes bad and it probably gives diseases and bad breath, too. Well, forget all that. There is a good reason to get acquainted with this stuff, because it's a part of each and every one of us, and a mighty big part at that.

Next time a woman you know is menstruating, or for women, when you are menstrual, check it out. Defy all of the pharmaceutical executives and Sunday school teachers and sex ed instructors and everyone else who says to hide that miracle away. Get a nice handful of menstrual blood and smell it and taste it. Holding some of this dark, lumpy stuff can be pretty humbling. This is the real thing, friends: CREATION. No storks, no miracle babies delivered to earth on a shaft of light, no birds, no bees. Here is the protozoan goo from whence we humans spring forth, right there in your hand. Of course, it takes some help from another handful of slop.

Boys, go jerk off. Instead of wadding up your cum in some kleenex (or in the Magic Shirt that's stuffed behind the dresser), take that in your other hand.

Here we have it all, the Big Bang, the beginning of it all, where you and everyone you know comes from. Now, we're all taught to find this stuff disgusting and dirty, to be hidden and ignored. It is amazing that we have this capacity to propagate life, yet we pretend that it's just dirty stains on our underwear.

We need to be as familiar as possible with this ability to create. Thanks to sexual guilt and misinformation, we're not. Churches, schools, parents, policy makers: no one is speaking all the facts. They give us guilt, myths, half-truths, and contradictory moral stands. Combine that with just being lusty and careless, and we've got a whole lot of people getting themselves into very sticky situations.

An amazing thing about this ability to create life is the human ability to control it. We're not animals who simply go into heat and have to fuck—even if you may feel that way sometimes. We have the ability to make decisions. We are aware of what will happen at the end of screwing, if sperm meets egg. Along with this awareness, we have a whole batch of technological contraptions at our side to make sure that no babies get made while we get our rocks off.

The problem is, many of these contraptions are not fail-safe; many times we ignore the fact that we should be using them; and worst, many wreak havoc on women's bodies. The entire reproductive rights debate often times comes down to restrictions on a women's sexuality. But boys, there is a way around all this—it's called vasectomy. I would even go so far as to say that it is the conscientious decision of any male engaging in heterosexual activity!

BIRTH CONTROL OPTIONS

Before you all run out and book appointments go get chopped, let's review birth control options. The one that people seem to use most is condoms, and there's a good reason for that—protection from infection. Of course that is extremely important, but right now let's focus on the contraceptive aspect. Condoms break, aren't always at hand, and let's face it—a lot of us are stupid and don't always use them even when they are right within reach. This is also the only contraceptive that is not considered a woman's responsibility. So, even though all that boys are expected to do is go to the drug-

store and have some rubbers to cover their dick, it doesn't always work out this way. So in order to be safe and sure, women are given a whole bunch of not-so-nice options.

According to Planned Parenthood's published information about contraceptives, the Pill, Norplant, and Depo-Provera all can cause many side effects. These side effects include irregular bleeding, heavier periods, headaches, nausea, weight gain, dizziness, and depression. This is because they all rely on altering the hormonal makeup of women's bodies. I don't know about you, but I don't like the idea of anything that messes with my fundamental physiology.

Norplant is a capsule implant that releases hormones into a woman's body to prevent release of the egg. This is an expensive medical procedure (\$600-\$800), and there can be infections.

Depo-Provera is a hormone shot which also prevents release of the egg. Along with the other side effects, this can also cause abdominal pain, and at least one woman that I have heard of simply does not menstruate.

The Pill is probably the most used of these contraceptives. Along with the above side effects, the pill carries a rare chance of blood clots, heart attack and stroke—especially with women over 35 who smoke and women who are "greatly overweight."

The IUD (intrauterine device) is a plastic device inserted into a woman's uterus which releases hormones to prevent the sperm from joining the egg. The only side effects to this method are increase in cramps, spotting (light bleeding) between periods, and heavier and longer periods. Also, for women with new partners, women with more than one sex partner, or women whose partners have other partners, there is an increased risk of tubal infection which may lead to sterility. And oh yeah, there is a rare chance that the wall of the uterus may be punctured.

There are also diaphragms and cervical caps, but these are not very effective, and just seem like stone-age technology.

Women can also be sterilized by a surgical procedure that blocks the fallopian tubes. This is a complicated and expensive procedure (\$1,000 - \$2,500), and in the chance that a pregnancy still occurs, there is a great chance that it will be ectopic or tubal, which is highly dangerous.

RESPONSIBILITY

It seems that all of these side effects and possible complications are a lot to ask women to endure simply to ensure that they don't end up pregnant. So boys, why don't you take responsibility for that thing you're waving around! Vasectomies are relatively inexpensive, they don't cause any hormonal problems and are very simple surgical procedures. The few possible side effects are mild swelling, bruising and, very rarely, infection. There is less than a one in one hundred chance that it won't be successful, and your tubes would grow back over time.

Yes, I know that it takes two to tango and there are always two people involved. But it's your dick, and ultimately, you control where the cum goes. Her egg sure isn't going to come leaping out and grab your sperm. I'm speaking from experience here—I'm not proud to say that I've been involved in my share of pregnancy scares. And while we were both responsible, I didn't have the sense, respect, and restraint to not try to put my dick where it could cause problems. Of course it was consensual, but it wouldn't have happened had I not initiated it. And there is potentially a lot more keeping a woman from speaking up than there is keeping you from not going there in the first place.

CONTROL

How can I say that birth control is about the control of a woman's sexuality? Women are forced with the responsibility of not getting pregnant and are blamed and punished when they do. Poor and non-white women have been sterilized against their will in this country and others. Women have been made responsible for everything from raising the child, to men's impotence, to rape.

It's part of a larger control of everyone's sexuality, from the anti-choice religious right, masturbation taboos, the social stigma surrounding abortion, to anti-gay legislation, to bizarre statutory rape laws whereby two 16-year-olds engaging in consensual sex can be charged, because they're *both* underage.

Although there are safe, natural forms of birth control, the pharmaceutical companies—the only people capable of

getting birth control to the public—refuse to explore them. Instead, they continue with contraceptives that are dangerous to women's bodies. Any new form of birth control is resisted. After the huge battle over the Pill in the '70s, companies are skittish about bringing anything new to the market. Remember the European "abortion" pill, RU486? Thanks to pressure from the religious right the FDA has repeatedly refused to allow that drug to become legal in the US.

According to sources such as *Nature*, *New Scientist*, and the *World Press Review* (these aren't exactly critical leftist rags here), the major pharmaceutical companies, especially in the US, "refuse to research and develop male contraceptives." The little research there is into male contraception centers on hormone pills and injections, which are just as harmful as those administered to women. Do I really need to explain the potential of giving men extra testosterone? We're talking about altering the chemical makeup of our bodies! And the ways that don't rely on pharmaceuticals are given the cold shoulder and never developed because they won't make huge profits for the companies.

OVERPOPULATION

There are too many fucking humans on this planet, and contrary to the popular image of overpopulation (so-called "third world" countries), it is US citizens who are using up a hugely disproportionate amount of the resources. Popular debate on overpopulation focuses on "poor women in third world countries having too many babies they can't afford." This is synonymous with the rhetoric about welfare mothers (which is really just code word for "single black mothers in the ghetto," another vicious misconception), and the current debates about how many children they should be allowed to have, if they should be allowed to raise them, and other disgusting suggestions.

Although it is empty blame, let's consider these poor, third world mothers who can't afford their children. Why are we shown pictures of starving children in Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia when we hear about overpopulation? Is the reason for their poverty and famine that there is not enough food to go around, and these people just

don't know when to stop breeding? Or maybe it's because of aggressive free-market tactics by transnational agribusiness corporations. These countries produce enough food; it's simply a question of who controls where that food goes. Instead of villagers owning farms for sustenance and commerce as they did for hundreds of years, now they have to work for measly wages on plantations owned by these huge corporations, which more often than not are subsidized by the US government.

Then, there are the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank which, according to Noam Chomsky, "extend loans under very strict conditions to the nations of the South; they have to promote the market economy, pay back the loans in hard currency and increase exports—like coffee, so that we can drink cappuccino, or beef, so that we can eat hamburgers—at the expense of indigenous agricultures." These indebted nations then spend less on basic social services like education while they export all of the food that they can. Along with these IMF loans also comes the demand to stabilize the currency, which invariably means devaluation.

Another demand is elimination of price controls on basic foodstuffs. This means that due to the money being worth less and the prices being much higher, all of a sudden many people in the country can't afford what little food is available.

In comparison to these people, US citizens use up resources in numbers incredibly disproportionate to the rest of the world. According to research available from the group Zero Population Growth, the per person use of energy in the U.S. is twice as high as any other country in the world. The average US citizen uses as much energy as 13 people in China, 372 Ethiopians, and two people in Japan. Along with this massive use of world resources, the United States has the highest birth rate of industrialized nations.

PERSONAL REASONS

Along with all of these reasons, I've got my own personal reasons for getting sterilized. This world is too fucked up to bring a kid into, and I only expect things to get worse. I can't imagine myself being fit to ever raise a child. For one, I don't have the money or the time! I can barely deal

with my own life! Trying to help another human being through life amidst the shit in this world is incomprehensible to me. I know that we're all fed this "get married, have kids" garbage from the get go and I can't deny the biological imperative of procreation. But take a step back and wonder how you would raise that kid. Would you just try to mold it into a little version of yourself, or or would you let it grow into its own person? I don't need to push my ego into another living being; I'm not trying to find immortality through childrearing.

This is not to criticize other people's lives—I have the utmost respect for people who do raise children and are good parents. I just know that I couldn't be one. Why risk it? Ever since parenting talk came up on the grade school playground, I remember saying that I would adopt if I ever felt the desire to raise a child.

Pollution, environmental degradation, toxic sludge, elimination of other species, and the many personal and social problems caused by urban overcrowding and mismanagement of resources. Why add to all of this?

PROSTATE CANCER—A RISK?

When I first started talking about getting a vasectomy, one thing that people brought up is an increased risk of prostate cancer. The truth is, there is none. According to the January 1994 issue of *Health* magazine, in all studies of prostate cancer and vasectomy, the link has been weak—so weak that it could be attributed to other factors, including chance. In one study, the vasectomized men had more prostate cancer, but they also lived longer, healthier lives than the other men. In general, many of the men diagnosed with prostate cancer did not even know it. That is, it was detected only after they died—they didn't even know that they had cancer.

But if you are worried about it, just remember that a good diet reduces your chances of prostate cancer, vasectomy or not. According to the February, 1996 issue of *Geriatrics*, the risk of prostate cancer is reduced by nearly 45 percent among men who ate at least 10 servings a week of tomato-based foods.

But really, even the scientists who produced the studies that showed a link between vasectomy and prostate cancer say that there is really nothing to worry about. The World Health Organization calls vasectomy "the simplest and safest" form of sterilization, and the US National Institutes of Health considers it to be "safe and highly effective." But hey, don't listen to just them, plenty of guys I know have done it!

INCISION, SNIP, CAUTERIZE: THE PROCEDURE

Now, let's get to the action. While the surgery itself is only a 40 minute procedure, there is a little wrangling to do beforehand. You need to schedule months ahead. They'll sign you up for some type of pre-screening deal, but don't be scared. Basically, you go to watch a video about sterilization—they want to drill it into your head that this procedure should be considered permanent. Because they were worried about my age—I was 22 when I called—I didn't get off that easy.

Apparently, one of the surgeons at Kaiser HMO in San Jose has refused to perform vasectomies on young men who haven't had any children. The surgery scheduler told me about a guy who wanted one at age 19 and the surgeon wouldn't do it—until he came back three years later with two kids. Well, I wasn't prepared to go to that length, so they scheduled me with a face-to-face consultation with another surgeon. I got all fired up, ready to show him all of the conviction I had about being sterilized, but he really couldn't have cared less. He gave me his bored-important-doctor attitude and made sure that I understood that it was permanent. You shouldn't have this trouble if you go with Planned Parenthood.

After this, it's all systems go, and you are scheduled for the surgery. Before the surgery, you have to shave the underside of your penis and scrotum, because this is where the incisions are made. You also have to bring a jock strap and wear it for a 10 days after the surgery.

You aren't sedated during the surgery. A local anesthetic is applied to your scrotum. You can see, hear, and smell everything that goes on! The shot for the anesthetic is the

only part that is uncomfortable at all, and it hurts less than a bee sting. After that, you feel nothing except for a slight tugging at your testicles. Two small cuts are made in the upper part of the scrotum, to get to the vas deferens (the tubes that carry sperm from testicles to the rest of your cum). Each tube is tied off, a small piece is cut out, and it's all cauterized with electricity! Wow!

Post-surgery, you swell up a bit, and for three or four days you won't want to move around too much. You have the sensation that lingers after you are kicked in the groin and a slight tugging feeling in your lower abdomen. The nurse suggested that my recovery involve sitting on the couch watching movies all weekend, with an ice pack on my scrotum and "one beer chilled between your legs and the other one in your hand as you drink it."

After 10 days, you have a checkup and they tell you that after six weeks or 20 ejaculations, you need to have a sperm count to make sure that you are sterile. Can you do the math here? I wanted to come back after a week and impress them with my masturbation frequency.

After 10 days, I rode a bicycle. The next day after that, I hopped a freight train. For a few weeks, I felt that slight tugging sensation every once in a while. After a month, I feel completely fine and everything works just great, thanks!

THE FACTS OF LIFE

A vasectomy should be considered a permanent procedure. The reversibility is only 50-50 at best, and decreases with time. Plus, reversal is a very difficult and expensive procedure.

There is less than a one in 100 chance that the procedure will fail—that is, that the tubes will grow back. The most frequent reason for "failed" vasectomies is not a failure of the surgery at all. It's men not waiting for all of the sperm to be gone from their bodies before having unprotected sex. Remember, there is still sperm in the vas deferens for up to 3 months, so you need to have a sperm count after the operation to determine when you are actually completely sterile.

No, your testicles will not shrivel up.

You still cum just like you always did. There's no decrease in the amount; the only thing not getting through is sperm, which is microscopic.

A few men have complained of loss of sensation after their vasectomies, but this is very rare.

Also, it's important to remember that a vasectomy only protects against pregnancy. There are lots of very nasty diseases out there and a condom is still your best defense against them.

Planned Parenthood (1-800-230-PLAN) quotes their price for vasectomy at \$240-\$520. There is a sliding scale that can probably be negotiated. However, if you have insurance, you will be asked to pay the full price.

I don't expect every guy to go out and get sterilized. It's a big decision, and hospitals and surgery are always scary. But this article should give you something to think about. At the very least, make reproductive responsibility an issue in your life. You can be educated on issues and you should support women in their decisions to have an abortion—or a child. But having a vasectomy is an actual way to do your part against the mechanism of women's oppression.

Hopefully you are educated about birth control and protection. You need to make sure this is always an issue between you and every partner you ever have. Talk about the methods that you are using and what you feel comfortable with. Being sterilized means that in an honest relationship where both partners are tested, condoms aren't necessary. If you are using a condom, you don't have to worry about pregnancy when one breaks.

Remember, a vasectomy does not protect you from infection. A vasectomy does not give you a license to be irresponsible. But if you don't want to have kids (and I mean ever) and you want to make a kickass decision and impress your friends and neighbors—go get yourself sterilized.

The author currently goes by the alias "Sterile Daryl" and would like to acknowledge Gwen Fish and Ian Lynam for various inspirations. Sterile D can be reached at PO Box 8272, Ann Arbor, MI 48107

1



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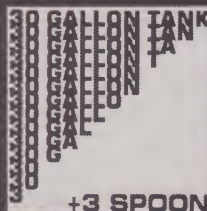


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The Prima Donnas 7" -- \$3.50

Punk rock without guitars? Yep, The Prima Donnas deliver dark Eurotrash with all the raw punk energy of The Stooges, more pompous attitude than the Rolling Stones, and conspicuous fashion that could only be their own. So spend a few bucks and open your mind to the three lads from "Sussex UK" who've had all of Austin screaming for the last two years.

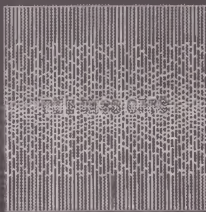


Spoon 7" ep--\$3.50
"30 Gallon Tank"

Wiry post-punk electric rock with sharp guitars, tough drumming, Beatle-esque vocal melodies, & a creepy organ. Spoon has a knack for writing a classic pop song, then weirding it up in the studio. One album track, two previously unreleased originals, and a weird re-mix of "Car Radio."

The Kiss-Offs 7"-- \$3.50
"Bottle Blonde"

Just try & wash this record out of your hair! With influences from The Fall to New Order, The Kiss Offs combine elements of punk, garage, & pop for a new wave of total rock power. The A-side is a pop gem for anyone who's bleached their hair to forget a lost love, & the B-side kicks out the jams with two dissonant punk songs.



The Kiss Offs 7" ep--\$3.50
"Love's Evidence as left by..."

The Kiss Offs deliver total rock power, Lou Reed style. Arty punk songs with the distortion at ten and songs about kissing techniques, movie cowboys, and secret lives. Think Modern Lovers with louder guitars, a Casio keyboard, and male/female vocals. Five songs.



The Vidi Vitties 7" ep -- \$3.50

Their 2nd single, with twice as many songs! More of the rhythmic reverb snap and twin guitar seduction one has come to expect from one of the finest and most original guit-art pop bands today. The A side features the battle song of a children's revolution and a funeral dirge for an unfortunate bug, with a Spanish surfy instrumental and a mysterious, hypnotic number on side B.

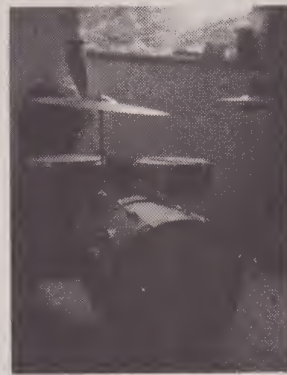


Vidi Vitties 7"--\$3.50
"Sophie's Choice"

Comparable to Polvo or even Television, this is challenging guitar rock without distortion, just heaps of reverb, pop melodies, & male/female vocals. This 7" captures the Vidi Vitties at their most "pop" moments on the A side, and reveals their darker, artier potential on the flip.

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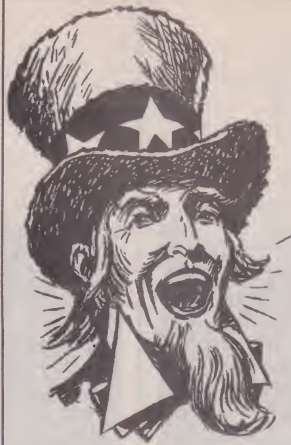
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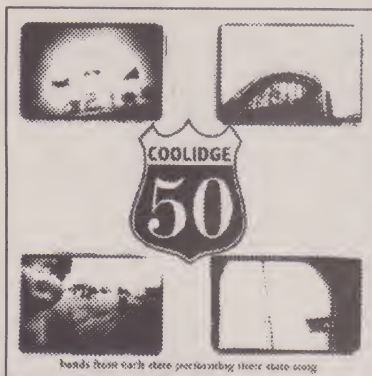
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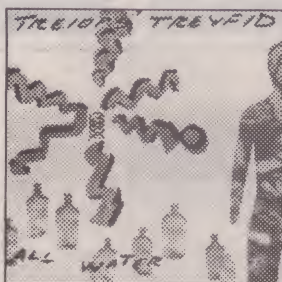
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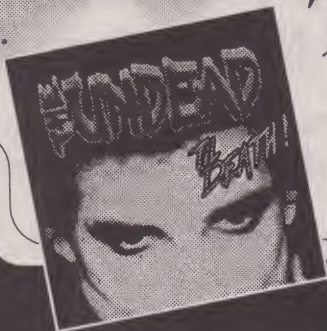
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I'm writing this add MAY 12th we are in the middle of planning a 3 month summer tour. planning tours is hard work. what's funny is that, you are reading this add now and our summer tour is over. but, now as i write it, I have no idea how it's gonna go. I'm sure half of our shows canceled, they always do. and I know we are broke, we always are. so that's why I'm making this add. so that when we get back, hopefully, some of you nice punks out there will order some of our stuff so we can try to recover from what I'm sure will be a rough tour.

I'd like to say hi to all the new friends we made this summer that i don't know yet, especially that nice guy or girl in that one town that let us stay at your house.

by the way, we are **operation: cliff clovin**

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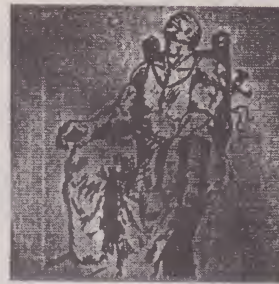
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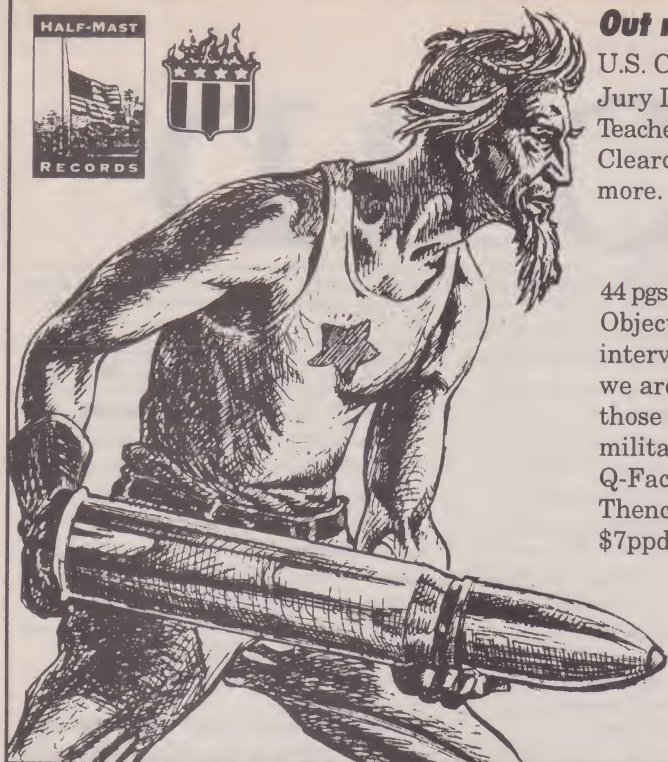
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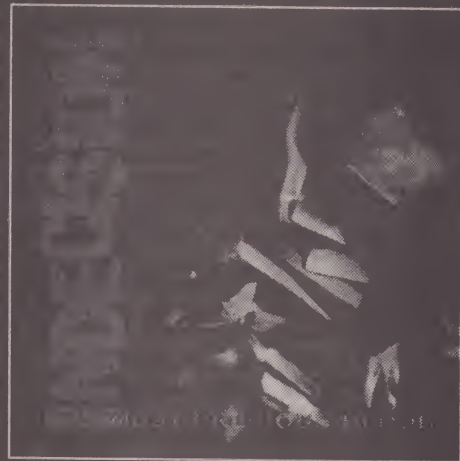
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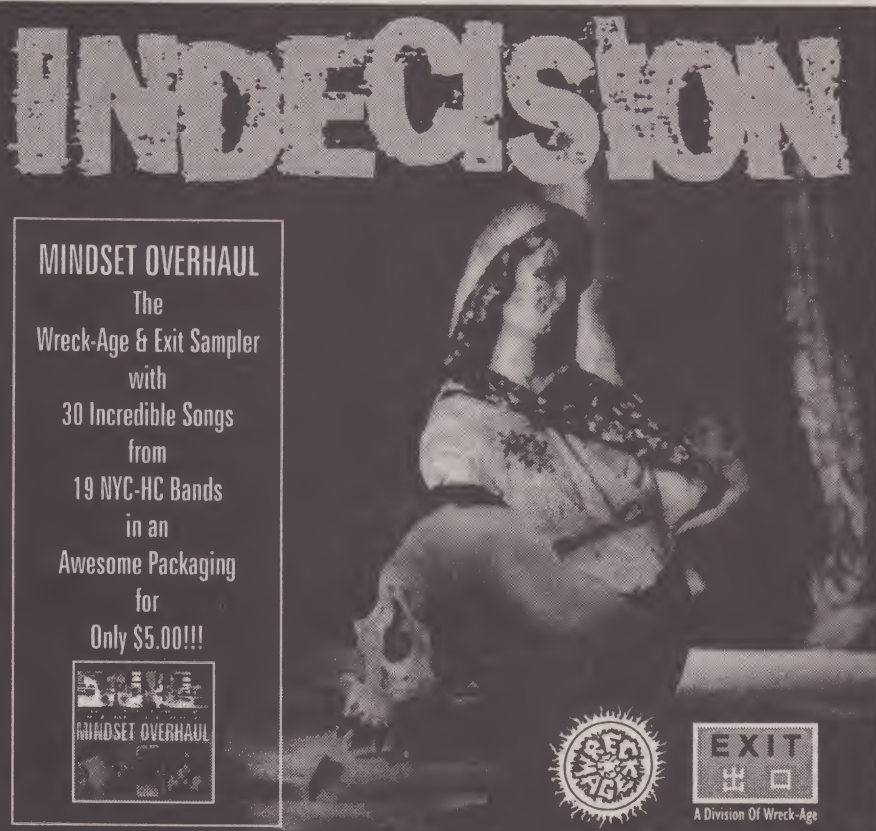
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NUMERICAL

30 Seconds Over Tokyo - S/T, CD

Straight up punk hardcore that might appeal to fans of the Pist, Anti-Flag, Showcase Showdown, etc...12 songs, no lyric sheet enclosed...I guess they have nothing to say? (NW)

Flat Records

'82 Gremlin - Biffed, 7"

Great packaging! And a nice layout. Hey, I love hotwheels too. But the music is a little plain. Like one of those bands that you hope get a little better next time you see them. Dual male/female vocals make it a tad exciting, but not much. I love bands that put out one 7 inch then right away put out a merchandise catalog. What ever happened to the music, man!!!!

Worry about the music!!!!(BC)

R.G. '82 Gremlin 225 Court St. 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201

98Mute - Class of '98, CD

The next big thing in melodic punk. Nothing new here and nothing very exciting. It's fast, melodic, and well produced, but just doesn't inspire me. The lyrics, however, are another story. They're intelligent, and deal with both personal issues like losing a friend to drug

(over)use and political issues. (MH)

Theologian Records; PO Box 1070; Hermosa Beach CA 90254

7000 Dying Rats - Fanning the Flames of Fire, LP

A mish-mash of grind, noise, electronic, punk, and bloody idiots screaming their heads off, this 27 "song" LP is a beautiful little fucked-up piece of vinyl. Guitars, horns, keyboards, a million bassists and vocalists all contribute to this. Oh, and they thank Anal Cunt in their thanks list. That says it all. (MH)

Up Jumps the Devil Records; PO Box 470650; Chicago IL 60647

THE LETTER A

Active Minds/Petrograd - Split, LP

I have to say I was never impressed by Active Minds before but this was pretty good. Fast catchy punk that ranges from Bad Religion-type to crust to German type full-on hardcore to pop punk - extremely varied to say the least. Strangely, almost every song sounds like a different band. If someone taped this for me and said it was a comp I'd believe it. Well produced

anyway and good political anti-social lyrics. The Petrograd side is also quite varied from mellow almost acoustic songs to poppy melodic ditties, even some reggae bits here and there. Not really my cup of tea but done with heart and soul. The lyrics aren't overtly political but the song explanations certainly were. Comes with a booklet with all the lyrics/explanations and a firsthand account of the arrest and conviction of an animal rights activist. Well produced and packaged release even if the music didn't fit my tastes. Active Minds are from England and Petrograd are from Luxembourg. (KB)

Skank Records A.S.B.I., 66 Ave. Charlotte, L-4530 Dudelange, Luxembourg or Sacro k-Baalismo, Felberstr. 20/12, A-1150 Wien, Austria

Adolescents - Return to the Black hole, CD

What can you say about a live Adolescents CD taped in 1989. Much like a contemporary of theirs, 7 Seconds, this band got a little soft in the years. At times this live performance is spectacular at other times they are bantering like "Wayne and Garth" from SNL. The sound is great the energy is high, but half the songs are a little, shall we say mature. A pair of great covers that make this disc worth it alone, both a Kinks song and a Stooges cover. All fans take note, but not essential to all. (EA)

Amsterdamed PO Box 862558, LA, CA 90086

Beanflipper - Garden Variety Manic Depressant, CD

These Australian potheads bring to the masses their own blend of melodic punk, hardcore, grindcore, and metal. This album is not for the weak. (MD)

Shock Records, PO box 22098, SF, CA 94122

Ann Beretta - Bitter Tongues, CD

Not bad considering I don't even listen to a whole lot of pop-punk. Fun, driving tunes played real fast. In one song, it sounds like they spoofed parts of "99 red balloons"—I swear, I thought it was a cover. It wasn't but they do know how to spice up a certain Primitives one-hit wonder. I used to love the video for that song. Tracy was so cool. Oh well. Comes with a superfat booklet containing some tattoos de fromage and rocker fotos. This paper smells bad. (PK)

Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563, Gainesville FL, 32604

The Assmen - Burgerbreath, 7"

"Beer is good food." A-side. Pathetic HC drunk-punk with non-PC lyrics. The band took their photo in front of a strip joint.

Sounds like Murphy's Law at times. (GG)
\$4 ppd.: Intensive Scare Records PO Box 640338 San Jose, CA 95164

THE LETTER B

Baseball Furies - Sounds of Mayhem, 7"

Aaaawwwriiiiiiiight! Kick ass rock and roll that reminds me a lot of the Dummies or any of Estrus' more punk moments. (Screaming Furies...) If this came out 20 years ago, it would have been bootied by that snobby guy from Norway on Killed by Death Vol. 1 for sure. About as good as it gets. I'm proud to share a state with these fellars. (Play in Albany or Poughkeepsie goddamit!) (GG)

Big Neck Recs PO Box 291 Buffalo, NY 14209

The Bastard Brigade - 200 Proof Bastards, 7"

3-chord blazing punk rock for getting drunk and partying. The songs are zippy with heavy buzzsaw guitars, gruff vocals with decent backing vox, and solid production. Their lyrics range from political to pretty dumb, but it wouldn't be punk rock otherwise. Very DIY and very cool. Green vinyl. (MH)

Eerie Records; 2408 Peach St.; Erie PA 16502

Bastian - Sitting Still Screaming Our Fears, 7"

The photo on the cover is of this band's equipment after the crash so you can assume there is either some heavy emotion or some heavy acting going on here. Bastian does the mid-tempo metallic-emo style and though they do this style well, it is kind of getting hard to enjoy these kind of bands. Think Grade, early Converge and early Threadbare and you have a slight idea of what to expect. In time, Bastian could be the new found heroes of screaming emotional metal. (BR)

Heart In Hand Productions, 106 Greenbriar Drive, Wexford, PA 15090

Battery - Whatever It Takes, CD

This band has brian from ashes, Graham of Worlds Collide and Shelter, and Ken of Damnation AD, Better than a Thousand, and again Worlds Collide. I must put forth that Worlds Collide was one of my favrite bands at the time, and I must say that all the bands that these folks were apart of were all awesome bands, and ones that I personally like a lot. I must say apologetically that I do not put Battery under that same lime-lite, many people I know really like this band, but I see them really trying to rehash something that isn't really there. From what I understand they are huge in europe, but haven't had the same success in the US. This is the type of band I would listen to if someone was playing it in they're car, but I would never think of putting it on myself. (EF)

Rev. pobox 5232 Huntington Beach, CA 92615

REVIEWS

(MH), KIM BAE (KB), MARIE DAVENPORT (MD), NATE WILSON (NW), PATTI KIM (PK), SCOTT MACDONALD (SM), SCOTT YAHTZEE (SY), THE OLD MAN (TOM), ED FAKTOROVICH (EF)

Ben Grim - S/T, 7"

Melodic punk played to the T of what the genre requires. If you've heard them before and liked them, then stick with the flow. If not go to the next review. (EF)

Radio Kaos records 311 Edna Street Neenah, WI 54956

Benumb - soul of the martyr, CD

55 tracks of grinding hardcore that barely ever lets up. This stuff goes from heavy mosh type parts to brutal blasts of speed. This record seems to mix metal with hardcore, like many of their west coast pals. This CD contains splits, and some live tracks. My only real complaint, no lyric sheet. Lyrics are important to me in the hardcore world. (NW)

Relapse PO box 251 Millersville, PA 17551

Binge - CD

Real bad bar and rock and roll with female vocals—not bar in a garage sense but bar in a shitty local band sense that probably plays out a lot. The singer is annoying, sounding at times like a dying cat—real whiny. They thank Joe Perry from Aerosmith. (GG)

Fan Attic Recs PO Box 391494 Cambridge, MA 02139-0015

Bird OF Ill Omen - S/T, CD

I would say these guys are influenced by the whole discordant, metallic Converge sound that is blowing up right now. Heavy, screeching guitars, mixed w/ pounding drums, and bass, and a death metal vocal style. 6 songs, with ok lyrics. (NW)

Eulogy 9301 SW 56th St., cooper city, FL. 33328

Black Dahlia - 7"

Oh man ... I don't know what to do with this. I guess this is crusty? Real fast at times, plodding at others. I have no idea who to compare this to (Code 13? I have no idea. Where are my HC friends when I need them?) because this is not my thing, but it sounds pretty death metal to me—if you like crusty deathly sludgy HC, look for it. The label has good stuff written about wrestling. (Although I must argue that WWF is pretty damn good right now, and that's the bottom line because I said so!) Limited to 400. (GG)

WNOALR c/o US Trash PO Box 5816 Edmond, OK 73083-5816

Blacklist - no title, 7"

Cool 3 chord drunk punk stuff here, nothing groundbreaking of course, but still a good listen. 6 punk rock tunes on this slab. (NW)

Paco Garden Records, 569 E. Colfax. Box 123, Denver, CO. 30203

Bleed - Tales of the Handsome Creep, CD

This CD is Wankier than Mykel Board on one of his swings through Thailand's seedy underside! Pure crap—garage base (fuzzy guit, hot rod graphics) but totally glossed over with cheeseball soul and blues influences that succeed only at failing. Stay away, far away. (GG) No Address. Labels should know better. Print it on the sleeve!

Blitzkrieg Bop - Top of the Bops, CD

Another anthology thingie of a 1977-1979 band from Europe. Being my favorite era of music, I can say that we need more of these. The only problem is that "Top of the Bops" falls into a rare category, it has alternate takes and raw demos, etc. This is how an anthology should be, especially when its on CD, cause you can skip alternate takes. I suggestion though is to put second and third versions at the end of the disc, it helps break it up. Blitzkrieg Bop should be on a Killed By Death or two though I don't really keep up on the series they deserve it. With singles like "Let's Go" and "You're Like a UFO" you got instant hits. Any fans of Buzzcocks, Stiff Little Fingers, etc. should apply here to receive twenty-eight tracks of authentic punk. (EA) Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW UK

The Blowtops - Maniac at Large, 7"

Fuzz kings of late. The Blowtops suck you in and blow you to pieces. A definite must in the garage world and lovers of the Cramps fuzzed out, bastardized rock n' roll will drool all over this. Again, another fine product from Flying Bomb, get their complete back catalog, now! (EA) Flying Bomb PO Box 971038 Ypsilanti, MI 48197

The Blowtops - Voodoo Alley, 7"

Psychotic hillbilly noise that is hard on the ears and bad for the psyche. In other words, you really should get a hold of this. (MH) Big Neck Records; PO Box 291; Buffalo NY 14209

The Broadways - S/T, CD

Take the vocals of Fifteen, the politics of Propagandi and the music of Crimpshrine, add a little energy and you've got the Broadways. A competent power-pop-punk outfit here, with those gravel-throat vocals. This is a pretty cool little CD—good art and good songs, but the lyric sheet is impossible to follow. There's not a capital letter or a line break in the whole thing. Otherwise, good stuff. (SM)

Bicycle Records, 1729 W. Albion St., Chicago, IL 60626

The Bulemics - Can't Keep it Down, 7"

The best of the Junk bands to get in this month. The Bulemics carry that rock and roll attitude, but in more of a Killed By Death or Hillside Strangler sort of way. Very gruff vocals, and mid-tempo short songs make this click into an under-appreciated and overlooked genre of punk rock. Record sales can only be helped by the faux Lesbian, spanking fantasy picture on the cover (obviously this is rock and roll). (EA) Junk Records PO Box 1474 Cypress, CA 90630

Burning Airlines - 2 song, 7"

Bill and J. Robbins from Jawbox, along w/ Peter continue on without one Kim and form Burning Airlines. Though, there weren't hard feelings, on record I don't really miss Kim. Live, might be hard to picture a Jawbox without Kim's bouncing smiling bass. Fans will love this single in that it continues the great writing style, but without the dual guitars has more room to breathe. I know that they are going to live in Jawbox's shadow, and I am not helping but they will do just fine. Essential stuff here, and we can only look forward to the full-length due in the Fall. (EA)

DeSoto Records PO Box 60335 Washington, DC 20039

The Butlers - Trash for Cash, CD

Oh Yeah. Excellent 70's style soul mixed with 3rd wave ska, featuring great organ, wakkawakka guitar, and super-fat brass. German band in English, but that's not the only reason I immediately think of The Busters. They're sounds are similar, maybe its just the huge horns. Some of the songs are very much soul, some are very much ska influenced, but not a lot of mixing within each song. Very poppy, very finger-snappable, very danceable, very good. (harlo)

BlackOut Postfach 10 07 16, D-46527 Dinslaken

THE LETTER C

Captain Speky-vs. Gravity, 7"

This has the classic Gravity records sound, and even mentions Gravity in both the album title and as the title of one song. Was that intentional? I have no idea. Captain Speky (horrible name by the way) puts a really great spin on the old Gravity sound by occasionally cutting away the noise and going clean channel, yet keeping the speed the same. Nice touch! (DS) Assorted Porkchops PO Box 4022 Wilmington, NC 28406

Carbana - Go Carbana Go!, CD

Combine Screeching Weasel with the Ramones (a real stretch, right?) and you've got Carbana. The music is fun and poppy and fairly catchy, but nothing groundbreaking. (SM)
Timoteo da Costa 1001/101 B3, Leblon - RJ - Brasil - 22450

Cash Registers - Hey Big Spender, 7"

This is a late seventies sound with an extra modern pop sense thrown in. The Cash Registers had a name to live up to and they failed slightly. The thing about this singles is they went for quantity, not quality. The four tracks could have been narrowed to the strongest two, "Round in Circles" and "Make Believe". The energy isn't high, and the recording is flat. Am I being harsh, yep. WE need to be in this over flooded market of singles. Get Hip and Estrus fans take note, and look out in the future cause the song writing is already there, all they need is someone in the studio to show em how its done. (EA)
Million Dollar Records PO Box 315 NY, NY 10276

Chicklet - Lemon Chandellers, CD5

Pretty light pop music from this girl-boy duo from Toronto. Reminds me of the time when 4AD and shoegazer bands were the shit. If this had more "wall of sound" to it, it would almost sound like Lush. Their disco number is kind of fun. Overall not rilly my bag of gravy but listenable. (PK)
Satellite, 920 E. Colorado Blvd., #151, Pasadena CA, 91106

Chika Chika - s/t CD

This CD is as bizarre as a merry-go-round soundtrack that has taken too much of the brown acid. With the loopy synthesizers and little-kid sounding vocals saying things like "Yo yo yo yo yo, ya ya ya ya," this is exactly what I would expect from a band named after a phrase made popular by the movie Ferris Bueller's Day Off. The CD insert has full color pictures of things like a man in a three-piece suit with a rabbit's head drinking tea. The word "weird" falls far short in describing this band... this is uncanny. (SM)
WIN Records, P.O. Box 26811, Los Angeles, CA 90026-0811

Chokehold - Prison of Hope, CD

This record is old, it came out in '93 or '94 and I can easily say it was my favorite record at the time. It was a perfect combination of music I loved (catchy well-played e-chug sxe hardcore) and kick-ass politics. The CD is the Prison of Hope LP + 2 songs off a 7" and a bunch of live stuff. Honestly, if you have a choice between the record or CD, I would recommend the record, because the quality seems to be better, almost in the way that the recording for the CD was taken off one of the records. The live stuff isn't that worth while either. So if you can only get the CD, do so cause it is a time/date stamp of early 90's hardcore at its best/most fun. This record is a must in any hardcore library. (EF)
CTW pobox 40282, redford, MI 48240 USA

Cilantro-Empty Soda Can, 7"

Here I am listening to the Cilantro 7" and all I can keep thinking is, "This sounds like those totally out-of-left-field J-Church songs like 'Birthday'." And here I am being really impressed by the also-very-J-Church-like lyrics and rhyme structure, when I realize that Cilantro lists San Francisco as the site of their PO Box. I go and compare it to the PO Box for Honey Bear records, which Lance from J-Church helps run, and guess what? They are one and the same. And finally, all songs on the Cilantro record are attributed to an L. Hahn. Could this be a side project for Lance? My 8-Ball tells me that "all signs point to yes." More low-key than normal J-Church stuff while retaining the same story-like lyrics, this is a great little 7".
Marigold 241 James St. Mt. Ephraim NJ 08059

Claime! - Fair Weather Fan, CD

Occasionally jangly guitars with some really cool heavy parts. Off-key vocals that still manage to go with the music. Sometimes I get a Superchunk sort of feeling from their music, and there's nothing wrong with that. Very cool. (MH)
No Idea PO Box 14636; Gainesville FL 32604

Coalesce - Give them Rope, CD

If you haven't heard of this band yet, then it's about time you make a new shopping list, and guess what record should be on it!!! I liked their previous stuff, but this CD is the type that leaves shoe prints on your bedroom walls. It will make you want to eat glass and then stick your tongue to a hot frying pan. It's the type of record that will make you sew your toes together, then go swimming in a sewer. In other words, stop reading the rest of the reviews and start that shopping list. (EF)
Edison recordings pobox 42586 Philadelphia PA 19101-2586

Coalesce/Boy Sets Fire split EP

Coalesce and Boy Sets Fire cover each other's songs—two each—on this split. This seems to be a trend for Coalesce—their split with The Get Up Kids is the same concept. Here, Coalesce play their brutal, angry guttural hardcore. Boy Sets Fire do too, with more melody. A good record. (SM)

Countervail - An Empty, CD

Total slayercore. I wonder if any of this bands members have any type of punk/hardcore roots? Road Runner records should look these short hair metal heads up. 4 songs. (NW)
Phyte PO box 14228, Santa Barbara, CA. 93107

Crankbait - Alcohol and Firearms, 7"

Ugh. A bunch of wanky guitars with a bunch of nasal, whiny yelling vocals. Messy and unpleasant. Red vinyl. (SM) 52.5 Records, 52.5 Wentworth St., Charleston, S.C. 29401

Crashdog - Outer Crust, CD

Two tired concepts here: 80s punk rock and God. Here's a lyric selection from 'Liberacion': "The kingdom of god is in our midst/silently crouching now its sits/waiting for its people to awake." The last thing I need is a bunch of angry kids with guitars playing bad punk with the same message I could get Sunday morning at church. Blech. (SM)
2 Jake Records, 920 W. Wilson, Chicago, IL 60640

Crib - She is Church, CD

45-minutes of droning bass and nothing else. The perfect soundtrack to sitting alone in a dark room thinking about nothing yet feeling everything. Low end aural mood altering textures. Something you definitely have to be in "a mood" to listen to. (MH)
WIN Records; PO Box 26811; LA CA 26811

Cursive/Silver Scooter- Split, 10"

Silver Scooter is your basic garagey indie rock group. They are pretty catchy and have some pretty good beats coupled with their melodic sensibilities. Cursive is more emo orientated and the lead vocalist sounds like he is in Flake Music when he is not screaming, whose singer sounds like Robert Smith from the Cure. Cursive sounds like they like to rock hard. I am probably most impressed by the packaging of this 10", but overall, a pretty good release. (MD)
Crank! 1223 Wiltshire Blvd, Santa Monica, ca 90403

Cwill - Beyond Reality, CD

Wow, this is total brutal, metallic hardcore, done by intense Europeans. The vox are fucking brutal, almost grind or crust. The music has a posi youth feel to it at times, while venturing on straight up metal. Even has a violin player, amazing European hardcore with balls, get it. (NW)
Scholastikastr 24, 9400 Rorschach, Switzerland

THE LETTER D

Damnation - Beelzebubbe Gum, 7"

Kick ass punk rock with rather silly lyrics. The production on this is sorta weird, but the music reminds me a lot of the Dwarves or Zeke. I gotta find more stuff by these guys. (MH)
BYO; PO Box 67A64; Los Angeles CA 90067

Degenerates / Stalking Leaver - split, 7"

Both bands have a heavy 3-chord punk rock thing going on. Degenerates have some decent political lyrics, while Stalking Leaver's lyrics are relatively stupid. Not a bad sample of a couple of lesser known bands, though. Red vinyl. (MH)
Roachender Records; 91 Simmons Street #2; Providence RI 02909

Dig Dug - s/t, 7"

Being from Chicago, I think my opinion on pop punk is slightly different from the average person from any other given city. In Chicago, you either love it or you hate it. Mark me down for the latter. With that said, you can maybe follow what I will say about Dig Dug. They play

annoying pop punk with no sense of originality but I can guarantee just about any given rich fifteen year old kid with green hair and big pants will eat this up on their way to the show.

Done and done. (BR)

Rebound Records, 17019 Evergreen Elm Way, Houston, TX 77059

The Dirtbombs - Tina Louise, 7"

Three wild tracks by Mick Collins and the boys, I highly suggest that you get your pimply face, teenage body down to the good record store in town and order the complete Gories back catalog. While you are waiting for the chumps to deliver you should have got this why you were there. You gonna be changed w. the two bass, two drums, and loads of soul, I guarantee you will be primed for the Gories records coming your way. (EA)

Flying Bomb PO Box 971038 Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Disc - Disc, CD

If you want to know what this release sounds like, go right now and take one of your old CD's (or a new one for that matter, try something by Reel Big Fish) and just scratch the shit out of it. Run over it with your car, hit it with a baseball bat, sand your floor with it, use it to clean chemical spills, whatever. Now, put that baby in your CD player and listen to the beautiful sounds which spring forth. "Disc" is a two CD set (yes a two CD set!! that is 140 minutes) of music created using every sonic glitch and skip and annoying fluke that compact discs can produce. I use the word "music" lightly though, because the result of this experiment is far from musical. When I first put this in I thought my CD player was about to explode, it took me two different CD players until I realized that it was supposed to sound like that. From the standpoint of a musical experiment this is a pretty cool idea, but unfortunately I would have to say that the experiment failed. Some of the "songs" work better than others, but most (like the one that just produces a squealing hum sound for ten minutes straight) are just really fucking annoying. Unless you're a really hard core technohead you will probably will want to steer clear of this. Fun. (JK)

Vinyl Communications, PO box 420988, San Francisco, CA 94142

Discript/Y - Split, 7"

The Discript side is ho-hum gloom crust stuff. Fast 1234 music with cryptic vocals and low heavy guitar sound. Not my thing really. The Y stuff on the other hand blows me away. Somewhat dark sounding full hardcore attack with dual male vocals and drumming so perfect it could be from a drum machine. Full, heavy, angry, and creative with a very distinct sound- I think this is one of the best bands around. (KB)

Anomie, Feldsieper Str. 13, 44809 Bochum, Germany

The Divine Hookup-s/t, 7"

Great use of keyboards on what would otherwise be a total by-the-book emo record. (DS)
Landmark Records/Drawing Room Records

DOA - The Lost Tapes, CD

Wow. Fifteen old DOA songs that haven't been released before pulled off forgotten tapes—and they sound good. For those unfamiliar, DOA are up there with Dead Kennedys and Black Flag as great and influential early North American punk bands. They're snotty, political, and pull no punches. Many of these songs were released in some other form, but the songs here have a great raw feel to them—fitting for DOA. Good stuff. (SM)

Plastic Head Distribution, Unit 15, Bushell Business Estate, Hithercroft, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 9DD, UK

DOA - Festival of Atheists, CD

Most punk bands whose heyday was almost two decades ago usually produce material that makes a mockery of themselves. DOA didn't. Although nothing on this comes close to being as good as "The Prisoner," it's still good snotty old school punk rock. They even manage, for the most part, to avoid the worst trap that old punk bands fall into: accidentally going metal. Nice work. (SM)

Plastic Head Distribution, Unit 15, Bushell Business Estate, Hithercroft, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 9DD, UK

Don Caballero—What Burns Never Returns, CD

More math rock yammering from some of the forefathers of the genre. (DS)

Touch & Go PO Box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625

Don Martin Three - S/T, 12"

This record is like one hell a roller coaster ride which just keeps weaving in and out of different sounds. Rad guitars, powerful drumming, and half screamy/half-singy type vocals. Repetition is a good thing, yep. HC bands who print their lyrics are brave souls. I give props alone for such backbone. These here lyrics are fairly vague but still pretty emotive. I do like fire heh. Dig the wiggly artwork that comes along with this one. Nutso. (PK)

PO Box 13673, Gainesville FL, 32604

Dub Narcotic-Old Time Relijun, 7"

The longer Calvin Johnson sticks with Dub Narcotic, the longer I wonder what the fuck he's thinking. This bad indie-rock funk just doesn't get better with age. (DS)

K Records

Dulac Swade/Spickle-split, CD

Dulac play totally generic early-80s So-Cal hardcore. Spickle play fairly intricate rock/hardcore instrumentals. All in all, I'm ready for a nap. (DS)

8013 Records 8214 Plum St. New Orleans, LA 70115

The Dylan Mckay's - Kick Ass Rocknroll Album, CD

Pretty generic poppy, melodic stuff. Sort of what you'd expect from such a horrible band name. (GG)

\$6 ppd.: Casey 24420 Chaps Clr. Murrieta, CA 92562

Dynamic Truths - You Take it All/Profit From Loss, 7"

Out of the ashes of the great Honor Role and Coral comes Bob Schick's new band Dynamic Truths. One hopes that with the melodic guitar ala Mission of Burma will be repeated soon on a full length or several singles. Having been out of the Merge loop for awhile this was an exciting record to be had. The layers of guitar, and melodic bass are pointing in the direction of a lot of the great "college" (I know its lost its meaning) bands of the 80's. Emo kids take note of how this was/is done to the highest degree. (EA)

Merge PO Box 1235 Chapel Hill, NC 27514

THE LETTER E

Ebola/M.V.D. - Domination Means Death, split LP

First off to avoid confusion this is the German Ebola. Powerful crust punk/HC with dual female/male vocals. Man, they seriously never let up with their brand of blistering fuck you political punk. They're just as powerful live too. Perhaps one of my new favorite bands? The M.V.D. side didn't thrill me too much musically - it's quite simple and straightforward fast-as-fuck punk with grovelly vocals. The lyrics though - wow! Seriously. One song is in German and the others in not-so-perfect English but they were so spot-on. They attack and discuss hypocrisy, violence, societal conventions, and more with an eloquence that most native English speakers would be incapable of. Brilliant. Overall: good production, packaging, and ideas. This is one excellent record. (KB)

Thought Crime, Thomas Franke, Proskauer Str. 22, 10 247 Berlin, Germany

Electric Eels - In Their Organics Majesty's Request, CD

"I'm so Agitated, so Agitated,....", so the song rings and you will sing it for weeks. The Cleveland punk scene had a hidden charm back in the seventies. This maybe one of the first punk bands, depending on where you start it all. Unfortunately, with no LP and a few hard to find singles you probably haven't heard the Electric Eels. Covered by bands like the New Bomb Turks and the Headcoats you may already know a song or two of theirs. It is an import and pay whatever you have to, just for "Agitated" and the great liner notes. I really mean this.... (EA)

Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW UK

Elmer - Songs of Sin and Retribution, CD

Well if this ain't down home good country punk with a side of biscuits and gravy, I don't know what is. Track #9 is a cover of "Rocky Top" with serves as the hillbilly national anthem. Which reminded me of the fact that the girls that work at Opryland in Tennessee are the world's most beautiful ladies! The music on this disc moves your ass across the barn while the lyrics cover all

the redneck basics of drinkin', cars, lovin', and fistfights. Like Boris the Sprinkler meets

Johnny Cash (BC)

Very Small P.O. Box 85534 Las Vegas, Nevada 89185

Embarrassing Rex- Supernuthin, 7"

Nothin really new here, just punk from the aftermath of Green Day. I've got nuthin more to say really. No, nuthin' (BC)

Gruntshop Records 826 Broadway, 9th Floor, NYC, NY, 10003

Endless - Mini, CD

4 crappy pop punk songs. Why a CD? God! (NW) 448 park dr. # 10, Boston, MA. 02215

Epileptics - System Rejects, CD

This label sent three incredible CDs this month and I thank them tremendously, I need more. The Epileptics, as the story goes where also known as Epi-X and later formed Flux of Pink Indians (which I was already familiar with). All 28 songs recorded in 1979, and has a cross of pop-intelligent Buzzcocks, but would fit on the Crass label as well (where they were going to be, but I will leave that to you and the liner notes after you buy this). Their first single was released as the Licks, which the label made them change their name to. This is great stuff, you should have already have put down this magazine and started ordering this. (EA)

Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW UK

Everyone Asked About You-s/t, 7"

Wow. Pretty great male/female vocals on an emo record that actually sounds like they MEAN it instead of just following the emo rule book. (DS)

Landmark Records PO Box 251565 Little Rock AR 72225

Ewa Braun - Esion, 2xLP

Ah, a split between the 2 Polish greats (labels): Malarie and Nikt Nic Nie Wie. This starts off (strangely) with an instrumental that drags on and on forever. I was hoping they'd kick into some furious punk Polish-style but was completely taken by surprise. The music is super mellow, almost indie or classic rock sounding at times. My friend Maurice says it sounds like Catherine Wheel if that means anything to you. The lyrics fit the mood of the music - somber, melancholy, introspective, and personal. The lyrics (in Polish, translated into English) for "AIDS" gave me chills: "I've got AIDS and I vomit blood...I beg for a new day so that the old one doesn't put me into the casket of my desperation." Definitely not my cup of tea but perhaps suitable for bedtime listening or for those who crave something slower paced. (KB)

Malarie Records, Martin Valasek, Gladiolowa 22, 60-175 Poznan, Poland or Nikt Nic Nie Wie PO Box 53, 34-400 Nowy Targ, Poland

The Exploder - This Sound Starts Right Now, CD

The name of this band—The Exploder—fits pretty well. They play screamy hardcore, with lots of pounding and stops and starts. The music reminds me a bit of Shotmaker and other hardcore/emo bands of a few years past. They play it well and with energy. Good stuff. (SM) Reptilian Records, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231

Eyeball - Talkin' Straight, CD

I took one look at the layout and I had the feeling I might enjoy this. The singer screams the title of the CD and the music breaks into energetic youth crew SXE that bears similarities to Judge and Undertow. Are the lyrics generic? Yes. Has this style been done before? Yes again. But; when done well, I'm am won over in an instant and Eyeball does this style even better. This CD is amazing and I haven't stopped listening to this yet. If all 88' clone bands were this good, hardcore in the states might actually be worth something. (BR) Crucial Response Records, Kaiserfeld 98, 46047 Oberhausen, Germany

THE LETTER F

Facedown-Beyond All Horizons, CD

"Having a face of your own is essential if you don't want to drown in a sea of moderation. I'm not saying we're the most innovative band around (far from it) and sure, we have our influences too but we refuse to be mere copycats." Songs about Animal Rights, being straightedge, rape, why war is bad, and a "fairly personal love song." Lots of metal parts, plenty of moshcore parts... Did they read their own liner notes? This is as derivative as they get. (DS)

Genet Records PO Box 447 9000 Gent 1 Belgium

Fastbreak - Fast Cars, Fast Women, CD

These guys have entirely captured the sound of Dag Nasty's first album, whether they meant to or not. Speedy and melodic with gruff vocals and an excellent guitar sound. Relatively short, but not lacking. (MH)

Big Wheel Recreation; 125 Huntington Ave #24; Boston MA 02155

Film Star - Tranquil Eyes, CD

Though punk and independent cross in many aspects, this is a true independent release that is anything but what I can consider punk. On many elements this copies from modern "Alternative" culture/music. Structure, production, the whole deal. Could easily be played between Sting and whoever the new band is these days. (EA)

No need for an address

Firestone - Element CD

The satanic imagery in the straightedge scene may have been humorous in the early stages but suffice to say that it has worn itself thin. The reason I mention this is because this CD is bombarded with pictures of demons, angels

and tarot cards. If you then guessed that this release is full on metal, you are correct. The influences are pretty obvious if you are familiar with late eighties German speed metal. I might have been prone to like this CD more but the lyrics are a little too straightforward for the intricate styling in the music. I like my metal with lyrics about Vikings anyway. (BR) Sober Mind Records, P.O. Box 206, 8500, Kortrijk, Belgium

Four Letter Word - Do You Feel Lucky Punk?, 7"

In four words, "this is really good!" (BC) BYO Records P.O. Box 67A64, LA CAL. 90067

Frig A-Go-Go- Frigg-A-Licious, 7"

Classic garage complete with squeaky organ. Certainly nothing new, but is anything in this genre? (DS)

360 Twist PO Box 9367 Denver, CO 80209

Fuck On The Beach - Fastcore on the Beach, 7"

Fans of Japanese speedcore watch out! This is a total thrash frenzy, with vox that at times sound like Bronson, while the music stays insanely manic. 13 Japanese thrash anthems that will wipe you're ass! (NW) Slap A Ham, PO box 420843, SF, CA. 94142 0843

The Fuzz Factor - Make Their Move, CD

Clean, mid-tempo pop punk. The songs are almost all catchy love ditties, about girls and being lonely and that sort of things. The singer has a smooth voice that works well. A decent recording, but nothing special. (SM) Amp Records, 92 Kenilworth Ave. S., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8K-2S9

THE LETTER G

Give Until Gone - Whatever Works, CD

Glancing at the layout, I have to say that I really like the artwork. It is just too bad that I do not like this at all. I read about this band before and I had a feeling that this would be hard on my ears. I was right. In the first song, the vocal-ist sounds like he is straining for breath at some points, which does nothing to help their cause. Musically, it is in the same vein as most of the bands containing ex-hardcore kids who discovered The Promise Ring. I am bored. (BR) Dim Mak Records, P.O. Box 14041, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

Gods Reflex/the Rodmans - Split 7"

Both bands play poppy punk with distortion on their guitars, fast beats, and vocals that sound snotty and angry. If you are into pop punk but still like power, check this split out. (MD) Rebound Records, 17019 Evergreen Elm Way, Houston TX 77059

Guernica Y Luno, 10"

Unfortunately I think this suffers from poor production. There is energy in the music that just doesn't seem to be pulled off in the recording. For the most part this is pretty typical Polish punk stuff - fast with occasional slower interludes and multiple chanted vocals. A few songs stray from this - one bizarre number is just percussion with vocals, another is this kind of lethargic droning song, and another is a sort of rap song. The lyrics (translated into English) are quite passionate and heartfelt coming from a humanistic viewpoint. Maybe with some more focus and better recording this band could be the next big thing out of Poland. Comes with a huge poster/insert of a rally in front of Picasso's Guernica. (KB)

Nikt Nic Nie Wie PO Box 53, 34-400 Nowy Targ, Poland

Gutfiddle - Kung Foolery, CD

Your typical poppy power melodic punk rock band. You know the kind, the ones that always seem to have a picture collage inside the CD liner. Yeah... in any case, if you are looking for another band to skate and or snowboard to, Gutfiddle is ready to blast your eardrums silly. (MD)

One Foot Records, PO box 3834, cherry hill, NJ 08034-0592

Guy Smiley - Cany Turn Back, CD

This band is really weird. I'm not sure how to describe this without "heavy alternative," sorry guys. If you like that sound then go for it.

It's not really my flavor of the month. (EF)

Devil Doll pobox 30727 Long Beach CA. 90853 USA

THE LETTER H

Hagfish - S/T, CD

If I am not mistaken the first Hagfish CD had a connection to a major label (am I wrong), either way this is more of the same. Hook laden, great drums pop to the core. I wasn't going to say it, but since it's the first thing I think every time I hear Hagfish and it is the first band they thank on their thanks-list, they sound a lot like All/Descendents. They are the only band to pull off that SOUND. Easy to copy, very hard to emulate I enjoy Hagfish the same way as I do All. They are almost interchangeable, so if you're a All/Descendents fan than get their first CD and this one and you will be real happy. Oh yeah, its even produced, mixed and engineered by Bill and Stephen of said bands. (EA)

Honest Don's Recording PO Box 192027 San Francisco, CA 94119

Hail Mary - Crashing Down, 7"

This seems to be the 1st actual hardcore record I can recall vermiform putting out in like 4 years. Heavy pounding rhythm, with technical guitars, feed back, and screeching vox make for a good listen. I'm not gonna bother with the

born against comparison, cos everybody does.

The cover is some pretty warped looking artwork. Lyrics seem to dwell on greed. (NW) Vermiform

Hanatarash - Total Retardation, 7"

A word of advice: do not listen to this slab of vinyl during the wee hours of the morn. This is the soundtrack of the subconscious. Two sides of crazily collage mayhem. Snippets ranging from the organic to the electronically tweaked. It seems as if you never hear the same sound twice. This will send shivers up and down your spine. Nuts! (PK)

Vinyl Communications, PO Box 8623, Chula Vista CA, 91912

The Harshacks - Jeremy is Drunk, 7"

These fellas are from some small town in Wisconsin where all there is to do is sit around, drink Milwaukee's Best, smoke, listen to music, and eat doritos. Just like their music you can tell everything is a bit excentric in De Pere, WI. Don't start eating deodorant anytime soon. (EF)

Beer City Recs pobox 26035 Milwaukee WI 53226

The Haters, 2x7"

This is garbage, noise junk. I have never met a fool who liked this stuff but its two singles made up of noise using objects like: explosions, flame throwers, falling objects, car crashes, skipping CDs, and scratched records. Holy, this is hard to even listen to. Much like the game of Soccer, I just don't get it. (EA)

Vinyl Communications

Thee Headcoats / Headcoatees - The Sound of the Baskervilles, CD

This is a re-release of an album that came out a couple of years ago. It is possibly one of the greatest live records I own. Bold statement, but remember we are talking Billy B. Childish and you get 8 songs of the Headcoats playing to an invitation only crowd. Tunes like: Just Like a Dog, All My Feelings Denied, and She's Just Fifteen. After that it only gets better, when the Headcoats are joined by the fabulous Headcoatees for another 6 songs including the Sonic's "Strychnine". If you are a Childish fan you undoubtedly own this, if you aren't (and shame on you) then this is not a bad place to start. I will warn you though once you get a listen you will be hunting down his over 50 (maybe 100) releases. (EA)

Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW UK

Hit and Run Jimmy - Do it Yourself Guide to the Mistreatment of Others, 7"

Speedy straight-ahead 3-chord punk out of Arizona. It's got buzzy guitars, bubbly bass, and solid drumming. The vocals are nothing remarkable, but they work with the music.

Nothing groundbreaking, but not a bad release for 3 bucks postpaid. Clear vinyl. (MH) 1251 W. Madero; Mesa AZ 85202

The Hookers - Satan's Highway, CD

Oh yeah, I got to play with this band in Green Bay and all I can say is bow down. The Hookers were dropped from Crypt (see they are on Crypt cheapo samp. 2) for being too metal. That is exactly what made Jay and I of the C. Millionaires think they ruled. Complete metal (see AC/DC) that was done with a serious yet such almost sarcastic - we are playing in a movie attitude. They put on a show, teaching metal kids how to take the best element of punk, short songs and apply it to riffs from the almighty Lucifer. With songs like: Satan's Highway, Get Fucked, Hometown Slut, Potwhore, Welcome the beast and Soul Taker, you can do no wrong. (EA)

Scotch Pooch 323 Broadway E. #405 Seattle, WA 98102

The Humdingers - See Ya Later Aviator..., 10"

Funny, I thought only total DIY emo labels did Xerox cover for their record sleeves. The Humdingers play adolescent poppy punk with no direction or drive. I can picture them playing at parties for their friends while their schoolmates love every single minute of it.

However, I'm a cynical bastard and I can't find it in me to like this. (BR)

Bizarro Records, 1045 Springmill Dr., Hoffman Estates, IL 60195

Huntingtons - High School Rock, CD

Here's a band who unashamedly co-opted everything the Ramones did and based their entire band around it. The matching jackets, jeans and Chuck Taylors they wear on their cover photo, their speedy three-chord songs, the way they sing, the "woah-oh-oh"s in their choruses, the lyrics about people sniffin' glue ... these guys are The Ramones, but without a shred of originality. Aside from that, the music is good, so I'll let you be the judge. If you like the Ramones ... (SM)

Tooth & Nail Records, P.O. Box 12698, Seattle, WA 98111-4698

THE LETTER I

I Farm/Operation Cliff Clavin - Split 7"

I Farm plays punk with more of a hardcore mentality while Operation: Cliff Clavin plays punk with more of a pop mentality. Good for the angst ridden youth of today. (MD)

Traffic Violation Records, Box 772, East Setauket, NY, 11733

Impel / 100 Words For Snow - Are You Down With The Revolution?, 7"

The cover of this 7" makes good use of card-stock cover artwork. Unfortunately, this is the only positive thing I can say about this record, as the bands fail to move me an inch. Impel, who has some west coast all-stars from what I've heard, has the groove rock sound down to a science. Picture Quicksand crossed with Rage Against The Machine, minus the rap. 100 Words For Snow is floating in the same boat as

the bands the Revelation stopped signing once they discovered that hardcore was popular again. Nice covers though. (BR)
Redwood Records, 1025 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92832

Inbliss - S/T, 7"

These two songs combine slow, contemplative parts with loud, abrasive crashing parts—emo ala Indian Summer, except the loud parts aren't as chaotic and the vocals are female with an English accent. The whole thing works quite well, especially because the softer, clean guitars parts suggest an awkward tension that adds a lot of personality to the music. (SM)
Subjugation, P.O. Box 191, Darlington, DL3 8YN, UK

The Infinity Dive - The Drama Of Broken Teeth, 7"

The packaging of this 7" was nothing short of nerve wrecking. I'm so used to just pulling the record out of the jacket and this 7" has a flap that goes over the top which forces you to make an extra effort to get the record out to listen to. Once I got past these minor details, I found myself getting into The Infinity Dive. These six tracks are almost a throwback to the sound that made Ebullition famous in the early 90's and the lyrics are very insightful and inspiring. I'm happy to see that there are still some bands doing this style....and doing it well. (BR)
Sociopath Records, 3149 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408

Inside - S/T, 7"

Inside play thick and very melodic post-hardcore stuff, along the lines of Texas is the Reason, but with much deeper vocals. While not being technical music, the guitars weave a nice thread through the songs. Good lyrics, too. Worth checking out. (SM)
Redwood Records, 1025 North Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92832

Intensity - Wash Off The Lies, CD

When I first removed this CD from my envelope full of records, I thought this was an Integrity CD. Thankfully, I was wrong. Instead, I was taken for a trip down memory lane to when I first heard "Blood, Sweat And No Tears" and I was fully into it. I proceeded to open the CD booklet and was bombarded with...intelligent sentiments concerning capitalism, animal liberation, sexism and more. Top this off with a inspiring cover of "Resist Control" by Life's Blood and you have a pretty solid release. It's just too bad that American bands playing this style of hardcore aren't this intelligent. (BR)
Bad Taste Stora Soderg, 38, 222 23 Lund, Sweden

THE LETTER J

Johnny Socko - Full Trucker Effect, CD

With this release, Johnny Socko bring us something rarely seen in ska music: the concept album. "Full Trucker Effect: music from the motion picture" is just that, a soundtrack to an imaginary(at least I hope it's

imaginary)action movie about truck drivers, with some really funny skits between the songs. The music is fairly standard Johnny socko fare. Fast, catchy third wave ska, that in my opinion, is a step above most third wave ska acts. Plus, with a song about David Hasselhoff with lyrics like, "The bay is watched/ the lines are botched/ The screen is filled with my bulging crotch," who can go wrong? (JK)
Asian Man Records, P.O. box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585

Johnny X and the Conspiracy - Buy, Sell, Trade, 7"

Hard driving power guitar rock with a punk feel, this is hard to categorize, and I suppose that's a good thing. It kind of reminds me of some of the early 80's bands that weren't quite punk, but couldn't be called new wave either. Different than a lot of what is coming out now, and that makes it refreshing. Check it out. (MH)
BYO; PO Box 67A64; Los Angeles CA 90067

Jon Cougar Concentration Camp - So Much for Unity, 7"

I used to like this band. Now, there's not much to distinguish them from many other pop punk bands besides the slightly gruff vocals. They put an emphasis on rock in these two songs. The tunes are decent, but the fun has gone out of this band for me. (SM)
BYO Records, P.O. Box 67A64, Los Angeles, CA 90067

THE LETTER K

K2, AMK, & the Haters - Three Phenomena, LP

Shitty dirge/noise/industrial. I just don't get this stuff. People like it, but I don't know who. Listening to it makes me cringe and want to hide my head and plug my ears. (GG)
Vinyl Communications (mordam)

Kid-606-Don't Sweat the Technics, CD

Considering that this is from San Diego and there's someone named "Antioch Andy" on the thanks list, I'm going to assume that the San Diego scene is going techno. This is a totally crazy techno record—lots of boomin' bass, plenty of static and electronic quacks and chirps. It's really aggressive and virtually unlistenable at parts, beautifully haunting at others. Cheers for expanding genres and blurring boundaries! (DS)
3345 31st St. San Diego, CA 92104

Kill The Hippies - 7"

Seven songs of bratty punkrock—just the way I like it. Buzzy guitars that remind me of the excellence of Huggy Bear. Tagteam girl/boy vocals sung fast and pissy. That is not a bad thing. Comes with a funky zine booklet-thinger. The 7" sleeve artwork is eye-psycho-candy. Where's my 3-D glasses? Insanity in the form of a 7". Write to Donut Friends for other tasty treats as well. (PK)
Donut Friends, 1030 Jessie Ave., Kent OH, 44240

Knucklehead, 7"

More grungy punk rock from these Calgarians. For the malt liquor drinker in us all... (MD)
Far Out Records PO box 14361, ft. laud, fl, 33302

Kodiak-emotional rail, 7"

This disc is warped beyond repair. It's too bad too because between the skips sounds like a really great, driving, rocking indie band that makes we want to get up and dance around my room... until it jumps again and I've lost the beat. (DS)
One Louder PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyme NE99 1NW England

Kontra la Paré/Petrograd - Split, 7"

Talk about encompassing nationalities - a record coming out of France, a Uruguayan band, and a band from Luxembourg that has lyrics in English and German. Petrograd play really upbeat melodic unclassifiable music. The first tune uses a lot of octave chords (I don't play guitar so I don't know what the technical term is) and is a bit moodier than the second track which is super upbeat with no guitar distortion and more prominent keyboards. The third tune is a cover of that famous Neil Young tune (keep on rockin' in the free world - you know the one). Lots of energy, well produced, and nicely sung/shouted fe/male vocals. Unfortunately, I'm not so keen on the Kontra la Paré side. I say unfortunately because I want to support the young and burgeoning Uruguayan scene but this is pretty bad. The first song is sloppy simple punk with off-key vocals and the other is a pretty awful attempt at a ska tune. Petrograd definitely wins on this one. (KB)

Darbouka Records c/o Frédéric Brahim, 17 rue de la Foret, 67340 Mentschoffen, France

Korea Girl, 7"

Korea Girl plays your typical indie rock with the Pavement-esque feel and other such melodies. This 7" is not bad, but more mediocre than anything else; however, I hear potential in this band and would be interested in hearing more recent recordings. (MD)
Asian Man Records, PO box 35585, Monte sereno, ca 95030-5585

The Krayons - 1987to1995, LP

The Texas punk legends, "The Krayons," drive us along the pick-up truck of their 8 year span of hits. "135," "Sick of Being "in," all the hits are here. I can't believe that this little 12" piece of vinyl can hold all these hits. More hits than an Ali fight. A must for your punk hits collection. God bless Texas and all its fine hit makers. Yee' friggin' Haw! (BC)
TFC P.O. Box 150877, Austin, Texas 78715-0877

THE LETTER L

La Secta - Cracked, 7"

The A-side is a rockin instrumental that needs lyrics, sorry guys. The B-side contains two songs, "Can't Be Ye-Ye" and "Murder City Nights". Fans of loud garage rock n' roll ala Estrus records

will appreciate this single. The second song on the B-side is a Radio Birdman cover and La Secta do this one in fine form. You probably get the picture here, I just have no idea why you're a-side is a rather dull intro. (EA)

Cargo Distribution, released in Switzerland

Last Days of April-The Wedding, CDEP

Listening to Last Days of April makes me realize how truly easy the current pop-emo sound (think Promise Ring or Get Up Kids) will be integrated into the mainstream. Smooth this out just slightly and you've got million-selling adult contemporary just waiting to happen. I'm sure this is totally well-intentioned music, but it sounds like The Cranberries with a male vocalist. Do you think they realize it? (DS)

Bad Taste Records St. Söderg 38 222 23 Lund, Sweden

Laughing Stock - Long Bus ride from Capital City, CD

Lo-fi, somewhat power orientated punk with yelling, but not screaming, vocals. Certain aspects of their songs lead me to believe that they may be, or were at some time, influenced by classic rock. Some tracks are slower and a bit more emo. Not terrible. (MD)

TFC Records, PO box 150877, Austin, Texas, 78715-0877

The Letterbombs - What the Hell Just Happened, 7"

Cool sleeve! Brown cardboard with a cool trashy drawing in EC Comics or old movie poster style. Pretty rad. Musically, it's fast, near buzz-saw pop punk with lots of breaks. Cool. Unfortunately, the vocals don't work for me. They are a little too sung and indy rock sounding for the music. Even points where it is more aggressive, the vox give way to the lighter style. Exacerbating this is the poor recording of Michelle's voice—it's very flat and empty sounding, pulling down the whole record. A woman's voice, when sung, should be clear and hit hard. This band could be really good, they just need a little work. My advice, listen to the good Tilt album (the one on Lookout with yellow on the cover) and let that influence you. (GG)

Harmless Records 1437 W. Hood Chicago, IL 60660

Little Tin Frog - The Pain and Pleasure Machine

Alterna-pop with female vocals. They're good at what they do, but this 59 minute CD is 55 minutes too long for my taste. (MH)

Geek Rock Records; PO Box 750651; Petaluma CA 94975

Longstocking-International Pop Underground Vol. LXXXVIII, 7"

Longstocking totally impressed me with their debut LP on Chainsaw and this 7" certainly doesn't disappoint. Comparisons to Team Dresch are plentiful and very easy, but they manage to escape tribute band status by adding a certain unnamable element that makes this totally its own thing. Fucking brilliant. (DS)

K Records PO Box 7154 Olympia, WA 98507

Los Federales, 7"

Real fast slightly spastic punk with vocals sounding like Johnny Vindictive at times—but breakneck speed is the key descriptive. I personally see this band as having potential, maybe if they work on having fewer and more high quality songs. There are 7 on here. I'd bite the bullet and cut it to three myself (even if it makes the record real short). For the first time in reviewing I studied the lyric sheet (I was bored, I usually just skim it) and it was, um, enlightening. These lyrics are all over the map! There are songs about getting drunk, dealing with cat excrement, modern American economic politics, and proper parenting. Diversity rules, baby. Red wax. (GG)

No Theme 2509 N. Campbell Ave. #75 Tucson, AZ 85719

The Lunkheads - Swingin' Sinners, CD

Yeah, the band name sounds like one of those idiot pop bands, the fuckin' Blink-182 or Sicko wannabes. Thank god they aren't, because I am in no mood. This is a flat out garage stomper—a la Billy Childish/Headcoats stuff. So much so that when the first track got rollin', I had to fight the urge to yell out "I waaaaaaaanna be a youngblood!" Crazy fact, good record. (GG)

360 Twist PO Box 9367 Denver, CO 80209

THE LETTER M

A Mercy Union - 3 x 3, 7"

I was hoping for a mod single here, with all the indicators like the label name and the almost Jam looking logo on the front of the record. Too bad, instead we get a real nice record with three 3 tracks, but not a mod tune. This is a hard one for me to in down, it could easily have been written from fans of the mid-Dischord sound ala Lungfish, Soulside, etc. but I doubt it is. Very beat driven with guitars that could come from Stiff Little Fingers, this could easily fit into your emo collection, or your straight up punk rock section. Coming to you in a nice screened, stamped, and sealed envelope its not a single to be forgotten. (EA)

Ultramod PO Box 1101 Athens, GA 30603

A Mercy Union - 3 chords Waiting, 7"

This sounds more like a pop-punk version of Stiff Little Fingers then their second single (read 3 x 3 review). A Mercy Union are not only hard to describe, but are hard to put down. Way better than the pop stuff put out on Lookout! or Fat Wreck. (EA)

Ultramod PO Box 1101 Athens, GA 30603

Migraines - Juvenilia, CD

Usually when Mass Giorgini produces a band they end up sounding a lot like Squirtgun, I don't know if that is because the band already sounds like Squirtgun or if other factors come into play, but regardless, the Migraines actually sound a lot like Sloppy Seconds on this album. I don't know if that is because the band already sounds like Sloppy Seconds or if other factors

came into play, but regardless, if you like Sloppy Seconds, or bands that were influenced by them, you will no doubt enjoy this CD. (MD)

OneFoot PO box 30666, long beach, ca, 90853

Milemarker - non plus ultra, LP

Here is some heavy, chaotic emo that surprised me with pleasure. Fans of Max. Colby will be in love with this. There are members of Sleepy TimeTrio, and Hellbender in this band, so you can imagine. 12 songs total, with a great cover.

This will not disappoint fans of this genre. (NW)

Paralogy PO box 14253, Albany NY 12212

Mineral - And Serenading 7"

If you have paid attention to any of my previous reviews, you are probably expecting that I will bash this record until I run out of breath. Wrong you are. Mineral has this strange effect on me. I like this band quite a bit and this single is testament to why this band soars while others crash and burn. Instead of poppiness, Mineral delivers feeling with somberness and sheer power abroad. I listen to this while driving in the rain or lying down...smiling. (BR)

Crank! Records, 1223 Wilshire Blvd. #823, Santa Monica, CA 90403

The Monorchid - Who Put Out the Fire?, CD

The Monorchid sound kind of like an eighties new wave band with strong punk influences. I didn't like this band too much when I first listened to them, but after a few more listenings I have to say that they have grown on me. I still can't say that I really like this band but I can definitely see how a lot of people would. Good, dirty, new wave punk. Worth Checking out. (JK)

Touch and Go Records, P.O. box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625

The Mount McKinleys - The Indescribable High Rise Sounds or Today, LP and four song, 7"

We got both an LP and an exclusive four track 7" from the fine Mount McKinley's.. Seeing this band play in E. Lansing with a revved up version of the Sonics/Kinks/Beat sound I was excited when this came into our hands.

Unfortunately, and too often, we get records like these. They simply don't live up to the live performance of the bands. The studio output seems to have less energy and is a little slower. My cat loved it though, out of the thousands of records gone through my home this LP is the only one ever that he chewed upon. I man handled the cover completely. See even though I give it a thumbs down, my cat Gollum says it was tasty with a bitter aftertaste best served with warm milk. (EA)

Distributed through Cargo, released in Switzerland

The Murderers / The Jerkoffs - split, CD

I've never been one to really listen to UK style punk rock and Beer City seems to be really into that style. If not, this CD would lead one to think so. The Murderers kick this release off with some UK style drunk punk and roll. The hilarious thing about this band is that they are from Minnesota but the singer sounds like he

was flown in directly from the UK. The Jerkoffs keep the circle pit in full swing with their brand of fast punk rock. I don't see myself really listening to this but maybe I would consider skating launch ramp to it. At least that's something. (BR)

Beer City Records, P.O. Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035

THE LETTER N

Naked Aggression - Recordings '91-94, CD

With the death of their guitarist, Naked Aggression have called it quits. It was almost fitting that this was already slated to come out. This is all the early singles and such. I remember seeing NA in a basement in 1992 (I believe) in which they played to about 12 people. They were super-nice and talked and played their hearts out. My best friend bought a single from them and it happens every couple months, we talk about the song "Right Now" and the instant great guitar lick that only Van Halen could have pulled off. You need to hear it, it's a classic song. I have heard stories of NA fixing other bands' vans while on tour (there is a mechanic in the band). Naked Aggression symbolized the DIY ethic, giving away patches, stickers helping others out. It is too bad they stopped short. (EA)

Broken Rekids PO Box 460402 SF, CA 94146

Nasum - Inhale, Exhale - CD

Holy fucking shit!!! Man the Swedish do the grind thing better than anyone...38 bursts of straight forward grindcore, that reminds me a bit of old Napalm Death, or Terrorizer. Amazing, brutal shit is all I can say. Only 2 guys in this band, with great lyrics to boot.

This is already a classic to me!

Relapse PO box 251, Millersville, PA. 17551

The Need with Joe Preston & DJ Zena-s/t, 10"

The Need continue to dominate with their circus-tent-at-the-apocalypse sound, this time aided and abetted by samplers and scratching.

There is one band out there that doesn't sound like anything else and that band is the Need.

When are we doing an interview? (DS)

Up Records PO Box 2132 Seattle, WA 98111-3328

New Day Rising - members of cynicism, CD

8 songs of that new school metallic hardcore that I've despised since its pitiful existence.

Chugga, chugga, open e, same catchy mosh beat that the kids can kick box to. Yuck, sorry guys, but I hope this shit dies quick! (NW)

Eulogy 9301 SW 56th St., cooper city, FL 33328

The No-Talents - What's in Your Bag, 7"

Sigh. Why can't more bands sound like this? Why can't more labels be like this? Why can't more band members be this hot? Great 77 style garage punk, totally raw, straight up rocknroll. Female vocals from the two hottest women in punk, period. Get any and all recs from them you can. (Their LP is amazing, and has a great sleeve.) (GG)

Broken Rekids

Noodle Muffin - Teaspoons of Sin, CD

Alternative Avant-garde noise rock that reminds me of something that would come out on Shimmy Disc. Actually, there are quite a few cools songs on here, that either groove, or make me laugh, or have a nice layered noise/music combo that makes this worthwhile for those that have a wide musical taste (MH)

Fyooog State Records; PO Box 25697; Los Angeles CA 90025

NRA, 7"

Chalk up another hit for B.Y.O. records. The NRA lads rock with a mighty force that rips through all 3 tunes. "No Excuse" is one of those chanting numbers in which after (or during) the first listen you will find yourself yellin' out the chorus. A dirty western rockin' version of the Bouncing Souls might sum these boys up. (BC)

B.Y.O. records PO Box 67A64 LA CAL. 90067

Nuclear Rabbit - Vicuna, CD

All previously released material from N. Rabbit's Spork 2000, Bowling for Midgets, Utensil Extravaganze, and Poo Factory releases. These guys are seriously into Mr. Bungle, which pretty much just means that there's just a lot of goofiness and weirdness going on. (harlo)

Beach Recordings, 1230 Market St., Suite #135, San Francisco, CA 94102

THE LETTER O

Orlock - 7"

Part experimental mood soundscapes and part grind, this is a strange 7". Side A spends most of it's time being droning and quiet, until suddenly your speakers start buzzing, and then a super heavy guitar, bass, and drums kick in with screaming vocals. The B side is more like the end of side A. This kind of has a Melvin's feel to it, I suppose. (MH)

Fall Records; 7121 Quail Woods Rd. Wilmington NC 28405

THE LETTER P

Pablum - S/T, CD

This CD is self released and quite possibly not worth the effort. A demo might have been more sufficient. This is well recorded non-sense punk rock that has always caused me to grow sick. From the goofy lyrics down to the uninteresting music, I can safely say that this CD is well beyond my listening range. (BR)

no address

Pankration-s/t, 7"

The vocals on this record are a revelation. Mixed so as to have no bottom whatsoever and distorted to the point that I'm wondering if they were actually phoned in, they add so much depth to what would have normally been a fairly routine quiet-loud emo record. (DS)

Donut Friends 1030 Jessie Ave. Kent, OH 44240

Parasites - Rat Ass Pie, CD

The fun pop sounds of the Parasites are back (and really better then ever!) in full form on their sixth full length "ratt ass pie." 14 songs of affection, disappointment and teenage love. (even though Dave Parasite just turned 65 last year) The kind of music that makes the sun shine on a cloudy day! (BC)

Go-Kart Records P.O. Box 20, Prince Street Station, NYC 10012

The Party Of Helicopters - Abracadaver-CD

Emo up the asshole! Packaging, delivery...I guess its good for what it is, but its on the fringe of being straight up indy rock. A lot of my friends like this type of thing., but I don't! (NW)

Donut Friends 1030, Jessie Ave. Kent, Ohio 44240

Pat Dull and his Media Whores - All Torn Up, 7"

The back of this single reads, "Dedicated to the continuing social significance of Cheap Trick." Well, they hit it on the head because even before I flipped over the single and was already humming to "Yeah Yeah Yeah" (the title track, I was thinking Cheap Trick. Congratulations. Four songs that all deserve to give this an A+ in my book. Well crafted. Formulated pop songs, in the tradition pop sense (not Screeching Weasel, lookout! records sense). The whole world could take a lesson from Pat Dull and listen to more good music. I will leave you with a great line that sums it all up from their song "LOVE n ROCK n ROLL n HOW THEY RELATE", it goes "Trying to find the words for this song. About me and you and our first date: love and rock and roll and how they relate." Classic, and I have been there. (EA)

The Fabulous Break Up Records 3935 Farm Brook Lane, Columbus, OH 43204

Penadas por la Ley - sexo dedil?, CD

This disc es en espanol. Three bonita women playing some basic punk rock with political messages. If you like female vocals with your hyper political punk then this is for you. The singer Fabiana was wearing a Moterhead t-shirt in the photo, so you know they are well schooled in rock. It's all like a slightly lighter

and feminine version of Los Crudos. (BC)

Luis Esteban calle 64 N 691 _ (1900) La Plata-Buenos Aires, Argentina

Pink Turds in Space, CD

P.T.S are one of those bands that are a wake up call and go right at you 100 percent of the time. These pist Irishmen (U2's nemesis) sing about the things they hate like indie shit, police, and jail. With over 40 songs recorded over 10 years, these pissy punks yell at you and make you think. These turds are not polished at all, and that's a good thing. This is a must for lovers of real punk with some bite and some of the earlier tunes have cool metal riffs within them. (BC)

Rejected Records 9 Woodlands Ave. Dun Laoghaire co. Dublin, Ireland

Pound WI - Perseverance In the Face of Reason, 7"

They have been saying that this is a lot like Shellac. Well they are right. Like a herd of angry cows marching down State St. and up to the capital building in good old Madison. Stuff like this works great on a 7 inch, but tends to get boring on a full length. So keep the e.p.'s coming. (BC)

Flannel Jammies Music 3160 Thorp, Madison, WI. 53714

Pressure Point - Youth on the Street, CD

The first thing you here when the CD starts is a large, loud and clear...OI...so we can definitely categorize this CD. The issue's of unity and strength through cooperation vs. competition are covered here, which is nice to see. I really liked that they covered the concept of how fighting each other only furthers the agenda's of people in power, when they are the ones that need to be fought. For those into Oi this is well played shit. (EF)

GMM records pobox 15234 Atlanta GA 30333

Puffball - S/T, 7"

Puffball play hopped-up rock and roll like the New Bomb Turks with a whole lot of treble. The music drives straightforward and doesn't slow down, and the vocals grate along with just enough attitude to make them punk. Fans of loud garage rock, take notice. (SM)

Insurance Scam Records, P.O. Box 145, Northville, MI 48167

Pung - State of the Youth, 6"

I would say the coolest thing about this record is the cover art. It is a total bust on an Assuck record. Musically pung remind me of an east bay band from the late 80's that might have been on lookout. Catchy and fast hardcore, this makes my day. (NW)

No Idea PO box 14636, Gainesville, FL. 32604

THE LETTER R**Rain on the Parade - Full Speed Ahead, 7"**

I have heard much about this band and their old school melodic ways, and everything i heard is true. Their fun and definitely one of the better bands from this style of HC, so start memorizing the lyrics and practicing your jumps for a fun filled night when the parade comes to your town. (EF)

Wy War 36 King Circle Malvera PA 19355

Reiziger-Don't Blind My Hands, CDEP

More emo-by-numbers from Europe.

Nothing new. Nothing exciting. (DS)
Genet Records PO Box 447-9000 Gent 1 Belgium

Regulator Watts - The Mercury CD

Ohmighod, how GOOD is this CD. My brain reels at eh awesomeness of it all. It starts off so tense and spastic, and then goes into total chill-out music. By the end of the disc, you forget you're even listening to the same band. But it's all good. Like some beautiful convergence of hardcore, dub, spacerock, blues, etc.

I think I'm in heaven. How can you go wrong with cool-ass song titles like "48 donut queen" and "sick little twist"? Okay, that's it, I give up. I can't do this CD enough justice. Just go buy it, chop chop! You will love. (PK)

Slowdime/Dischord

Ricanstruction - Liberation Day, CD

Well in this bands bio(punk?), they want to come off as a NYC inner city latino hardcore act. Though the lyrics are of political nature, the band sounds more like the red hot chili peppers. Not hardcore to me! (NW)

Richard Hell - 3 song, 7"

Damn, this totally sucks. Not the record mind you, but the vinyl was so melted, I mean melted not warped that I couldn't even think about playing it./ So I know I will order this one from Overground (though it probably isn't in print any ways). If you don't own the LP on Sire, Richard Hell and the Voivods, then getta off my street and go find it, its pop genius. This single has a couple great songs, though I can't tell you what versions these are. You get "Another World", "You Gotta Lose" and the classic "Blank Generation". This label keeps cranking out great retro-records. (EA)

Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW UK

Robot Assassins-s/t, 7"

Lower-than-Low Fi (the liner notes say it was recorded on a Porta-Sound with 3 Radio Shack mics, and I would tend to agree with that) straight-ahead punk. If there was a punk band buried at the center of the earth and we had to dig a very deep, but very small hole in order to listen to them, I would imagine that it would sound very much like this record does. (DS)

Total Sound Recordings 2036 University Ave. Berkely CA 94704

Rose Melberg - Portola, CD

Tiger Trap, Go Sailor, The Softies, The Three Peeps, Gaze...and not a sour plum in the whole batch. This is sort of a "Rose Melberg and Friends" collection of songs spanning the past few years. Byrds, Beatles, and Everly Brothers covers! Collaborations with Jen Softie, Peter Class, Dustin Rocketship, and this is by far the coolest—Rose's parents! Wow! Softies-style sweetness to country twang to crash bang pop a la Black Tambourine. It's hard to pick favorites here—each song sparkles in its own way. Rose is the pop queen of hearts. This is perfect for those nights of procrastination and daydreaming. For unabashed sapsters. (PK)

Double Agent, #3204, 188 E. 64 St., NYC NY, 10021

Ruins - Vrrresto, CD

HAHAHAHAHAHAH!! This is exactly what I've been waiting for. This is just like the Beatles, that is, if the Beatles were Japanese, screamed loudly and played a loud, chanting, freaked out punk rock-funk-jazz-death metal

hybrid driven mostly by drums, bass and xylophone and sang mostly in what appears to be some kind of weird backward Japanese(Are words like "beguotto" and "ffenniko" and "larikoschodel" Japanese?) chant. I can honestly say that I have never heard anything quite like this before, and it is pure genius. The sounds produced by this group of young men defy accurate description, so I can only recommend you listen to it yourself. In the words of Wesely Willis "It whips a polar bear's ass." (JK)
Sonore, BP94 - F33402 Talence cedex, France

THE LETTER S**Scared of Chaka - How to Lose, LP**

Attention Meghan and co. over at Empty: skip the promo packs of interviews, etc. They aren't remotely useful or necessary. When your track record is as good as Empty's, fuck promos! Let the name stand for itself. Save a couple of trees, a few dimes, and time. That said, this was kind of lukewarm—garage power pop with weird things done here and there. Cool, but not great—and very short. Other SOC stuff is better. (GG)

Empty Recs.

The Secretions-We Secrete, You Suck, 7"

The thing that makes this record stand out above the million other snotty pop-punk bands like it is the totally amusing liner notes that document the many, many lineup changes that include singers going born-again and drummers becoming cops. The music isn't hardly as interesting as the insert. (DS)

Drool City Records 5141 38th Ave. Sacramento, CA 95824

Serene - Inward Flowering, CD

Sometimes European hardcore seems to be really good and sometimes it seems like it is becoming a carbon copy of bad American hardcore. I would say that Serene definitely draws their influences from many popular Canadian bands (of which there are just as many bad bands as there are in the states) but they pull this off with a significant amount of flair. The formula is pretty standard; personal lyrics, metallic-emo music and strained vocals. The standout is easily "The Immortal Emo-Kid". How silly can we possibly get? (BR)

Genet P.O. Box 447-9000, Gent 1 - Belgium

Shaggy Hound - 9 Songs By..., CD

This record is a nice surprise. I had no idea what to expect when I dropped it in the player, and I can easily say that I like this thing. It's the perfect combination between sensefield and greenday. I think their from france, but they sing in english. Real catchy pop. Good stuff here. (EF)

Shaggy Hound Rabeyrolles Franck 18 rue, Saint-James 33000 Bordeaux (F)

The Shock (le shock) - Glitz and Glamour, 7"

Holy smokes, this single captivated my with its great artwork, and didn't stop there. Not since a band like the Yahmos have a been this intrigued with a sloppy, high flying energy,

punk rock outfit. Take the best parts of the Minutemen (short songs, no distortion on the guitars, abrupt endings), throw in the high energy mayhem of say the Yahmos and add a keyboard/organ device and you get what is known as The Shock. "Glitz and Glamour", "I don't want to Learn Your Fucking Lesson" and "Soda Pop Smash" are over before you know it and your arm reaches to spin this platter again. Will make many of mixed tapes in years to come, give us more, tell me more. (EA)

Tiger Suit Records PO Box 15482 Long Beach, CA 90815

Skabs - greatest hits, 7"

Total '77 sounding punk, with both male, and female vox. Sounds European, though they are from NYC. (NW)

Wacp Records, 12 wayatt circle, Somerville, MA 02143

Slaughter and the Dogs - Barking up the Right Tree, CD

Well, why would you put out a live 1996 show. When there are at least a dozen of great live recordings of this band in their prime. Though there cover of "Mystery Girls" is still classic, even in the 1996 show. You get their hits as well. Essential only if you already have there other stuff. (EA)

Amsterdarned PO Box 8652558 LA, CA 90086-2558

Snuff - Tweet Tweet My Lovely, CD

I could just say that this album is on Fat Wreck Chords, and let you decipher the meaning (not that you don't know what I'm talking about), but I should add that many of today's thrashy power pop bands were inspired by the likes of Snuff, who are, as they say back in the old country "old school." After taking a hiatus from the band which started in the late 80's, some members were in Guns and Wankers. In any case, Snuff is back, and if you are a Fat Wreck Chords fan and you need a bit of a history lesson as well as a new CD to brighten up your day of skateboarding, pick this up. (MD)

Fat. Wreck. Chords.

Sowplot - Conciencias, CD

If nothing else, it is good to see straightedge and hardcore from all four corners of the globe. Sowplot, from Spain, plays a mix of 88' SXE a la Wide Awake and NYHC. The thing that sets them apart from the norm is their willingness to embrace political ideas, no matter how "trivial" some may be considered. The most refreshing aspect is that a lot of people who like this style but don't care for the idiocy involved may find something noteworthy in bands such as this. (BR)

B-Core Disc, P.O. Box 35221, 08080 Barcelona

Speak 714 - Knee Deep In Guilt, CD

This band is made up of members of Ignite, Unity, Straight Faced, Slapshot, with Dan O'Mahony on the mic (No For An Answer, Carrynation, and 411). Pretty much every band Dan O's done sounds similar to me, cause his

voice is so distinct that it stands out above the music. If you liked his previous projects, than this is your cup of green tea. I must admit that the music on this CD is very catchy, and well played. I saw them play about a month ago and wasn't really impressed. Now that i've heard the CD i'm excited to see them again (they are playing next week) and see if there is a difference in my opinion. The CD is good quality fast paced old school style Hardcore. (EF)

Revelation records pobox 5232 Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232

The Splash 4 - Filth City, CD

Eight song CD/10" that sort of picks up where their debut Estrus LP left off. The sound is a little different, you get CB vocals, as well as a more raw sound. There are a few instant classics and you would be a goddamn fool not to pick up all of Splash 4's releases. Nice Art Chantry design and packaging. If you missed these guys and gal on their recent trip to the United States, then you will be real sorry once you hear this. (EA)

Estrus Records

Squidboy - Illiteratti, CD

If this was 8 years ago, I'd call this CD grunge. Heavy guitars and a gravelly vocals. The whole thing just sort of grooves right along. Enjoyable. (MH)

Allied Recordings; PO Box 460683; San Francisco CA 94146

Stalker/Skrupel - Split, 7"

Stalker play million-miles-an-hour fast angry punk (with Thomas from Y and Thought Crime on bass) with some insane drumming and solid shouted vocals. Seven short blasts here from a powerful band whose lyrics seem to deal mainly with combating apathy. The "band member" photos (four pictures of dogs) made me laugh out loud. Skrupel were a lot more crusty and chaotic sounding with gruff paired vocals. It sounds at times like it's messy but is actually tight as hell. The guitars border on metal sometimes and the drumming is crazy fast. The production and packaging are both top-notch. What more could you want out of a record? (KB)

Thought Crime, Thomas Franke, Proskauer Str. 22, 10 247 Berlin, Germany

Stillwell - My Eyes Are Blue Again, 7"

The ad that accompanies this record says that they don't want to continue flooding the market with bands of this style but this band needed to be heard. After one song I can say that I did not need to hear this record. There are more bands out there than Braid and The Promise Ring!!! Finnish this off with the worst record title I've seen this month and you have another band of sheltered kids that need to expand their listening ability. (BR)

Rebound Records, see Dig Dag

Stinkaholic - Melee, CD

They've got the punk...they've got the ska...Do YOU dig the punk-ska? Stinkaholic combines the punk ska sensibilities of the illustrious Operation Ivy with a hint of Grapefruit-esque tinges. Non-punkers need not apply. (MD)

206 Records, 8314 Greenwood Ave. N. Suite 102, Seattle, WA 98103

The Stitches - You Tear Me Out, 7"

Tom Deadbeat doesn't put out bad products and this is no exception. Though the Stitches used to excite me, their flavor has run dry. This single is excellent and can run with the earlier singles, like Vibrator Buxx or 16. That is the point though they are almost interchangeable, you only need one or two of their singles or their 12". I know I will be fought on this one and the world around eats up the Stitches and anything they put out. I am glad for you and them, cause they did it all right on this one. Two short, direct, catchy songs. No filler, they took the best and left out the rest. Too many bands put four songs on a single of which only one, two or maybe three are good. Note: new bands, you do not have to release everything you ever wrote or even recorded. Take a lesson from the Stitches. (EA)

Dead Beat Records PO Box 283 LA, CA 90078

Stizzle - Two Weeks Too Late, CD

Something about their energy reminds me of a high school punk band, that's in a good way. However, punk + ska is what Stizzle is all about. Not punk-ska, per se, more like melodic power pop punk with bursts of ska here and there. (MD)

Boxcar Records, #006-no address given

Stizzle - Two Weeks Too Late, CD

If your favorite band is the Voodoo Glow Skulls you will have one of two opinions about stizzle. 1) These guys are the second best band in the world! -or- 2) These guys are the biggest copycats in the world! (harlo)

Boxcar PO Box 1141, Melbourne, FL, 32902

Strikeforce Diablo - S/T, CD

Packaging is a key factor here. Minimal, inexpensive and damn sharp looking! My next request was that the music was equally compelling. Two for two! Strikeforce Diablo features ex-members of Gus and Tired From Now On and they play slightly emo-tinged sludgcore. At times, this brings to mind a really heavy version of Sleepy Time Trio and on occasion, I hear a slight Helmet, era-Meantime, influence. Variety is the spice of life. (BR)

Schematics P.O. Box 14861, Gainesville, FL 32604

Strong Intention - S/T, 7"

Now heres an example of why certain bands just dont make sense...Okay, they have a song about why racism is wrong, and then thank the one life crew...Hmmm, which is it racist or not fellas, or is it a cliché topic that everyone needs to cover, but no one needs to follow. We have a winner for consistancy here. GO!(EF)

FistFight pobox 364 hagerstown, Maryland 21741

Strung Out - Twisted By Design, CD

High quality melodic punk with metallic leads. Pretty damn tight, too. This is their 3rd album, which is a good record for a 6 year old punk band. Those of you familiar with their other stuff will dig this, and, other than the wanky leads, there's not much here to turn off any melodic hardcore punk fan. (MH)
Fat Wreck Chords; PO Box 193690; San Francisco, CA 94119

Stuntmen - S/T, 7"

Well, it looks as if Junk has finally gotten around to releasing all the bands they were stockpiling a couple years ago, the Stuntmen being one of the bands. Probably due to their new alliance w/ Nitro records (let's wait and see). The stuntmen are in my record collection, they even made a couple cleansing of the 7" boxes, so they must have the gusto, if you will. This single probably won't make the cut, cause I am a picky bastard in my aging years. Where the elements of any good rock band are there: loud guitars, sing-along lyrics, tight rhythm section, it seems that they are missing the edge, the p-rock in this single. Maybe it was production, maybe it was performance but this one doesn't hit me very much. I suggest this band in high regards though. (EA)
Junk Records PO Box 1474 Cypress, CA 90630

Swindle - Better Off Dead, CD

Swindle prides themselves and their 9 year career on being a straight ahead punk rock band. The liner notes stated that any riff for this record that sounded like any other punk song was scrapped. Well, I don't know if that is even possible, but they still manage to sound better than half of the shit that is from California these days anyway. A stronger drum recording might be a better thing for the next studio trip, but overall this does kick a little butt. (BC)
Cargo Music, INC 4901-906 Morena Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92117-3432

The Swingin' Utters - Five Lessons Learned, CD

No surprises here, another high quality album of punk rock, straight with no chaser, no ice, and no little umbrella, maybe just a dash of Irish drinking song. This record could easily have been released in 1977 and been warmly received by the first generation punk rockers. If you haven't been won over yet, you're missing out. I don't want to hear a single person tell me that all Fat Wreck Chords releases sound the same. (harlo)
Fat Wreck Chords

Switch - Late night, Weary Eyes, 7"

Do YOU like to skateboard, snowboard, or are you just totally extreme? Do you need background music for your extreme tendencies? Switch. (MD)
NCTM PO box 562, cape girardeau, MO 63701

Taxicab Samurais - Standing alone in a crowded room, 7"

Melodic pop punk + horn section + occasional outbreaks of ska = the Taxicab Samurais. And this band knows about catchy hooks. (MD)
Roulette 977 Valley Rd D3-329, Gilette, NJ, 07933

THE LETTER T

Taylor - (brand abrasive sound structure), CD

Recorded by Steve Albini, this CD comes screwed between two metal slabs with really sharp corners that you have to unscrew to open. It has warnings about not cutting yourself on it, yet I still came really close to loosing a finger while trying to get this thing open. Luckily it was worth the trouble. Taylor plays loud, driving, almost robotic sounding punk with lots of instrumentals. This band reminds me of shellac, but they have a sound of their own. If you can get this open without killing yourself, I would recommend it.

Taylor (brand abrasive sound structure) (JK)
PO box 470621 Chicago, IL 60647

Telefon - Hakova Panenka, LP

Well the label is from Poland but I can't tell what language the lyrics are in (maybe Czech?). This is fast full-on punk that sounds almost garagey at times. It's definitely not typical 1-2-3-4 type simple punk - the music itself doesn't follow any sort of formula sometimes sounding kind of arty and noisy sometimes like Polish punk. The vocals are often times multi-layered and overlapping ranging from tuneful background vocals a la Dead Kennedys to shouting which are all surprisingly versatile sounding. Personally I'd like to see them drop the noisy experimental stuff and stick with the energetic punk. The lyrics (which are translated into English) seem to be vaguely political, personal, and simply poetic. The nice cut and paste graphics are more overtly political. Good production and nice cardstock foldout cover. (KB)

Malarie Records, Martin Valasek, Gladiolowa 22, 60-175 Poznan, Poland

Third World Planet - From Isolation to Desolation, 7"

German release of a Canadian band. I don't think I've ever heard a band quite like this before. It has a kind of weird muffled production and a bullhorn effect on most of the vocals. The music which is always pretty heavy moves from almost grindcore to almost droning indie back to grind. The track "Renounce Identity" is probably the standout with chaotic grindy verses, a simple choppy chorus, and spoken bits. As far as I can tell there's only guitars and drums (there are only 2 guys in this band). I'm not quite sure what to make of this yet but if you're into looking for something a bit more creative than most but still fast and noisy this may be for you. (KB)

Thought Crime, Thomas Franke, Proskauer Str. 22, 10 247 Berlin, Germany

Thumper - Hellfire and Damnation, CD

I know nothing about this band, but it seems as though they fall into the realm of "ska-core," sound very radio friendly, possess keyboards along with horns, and sometimes break into rituals of tough sounding threats and what not. They also

seem to be from Boston. If you dig the ska, but are still a sucker for metal, then I have a feeling you might be into this band. (MD)
Elevator Music, PO box 1502, new haven, CT, 06505

Tortoise - TNT, CD

Hey hey, it's another Tortoise release and I am loving it. So much so that I can almost forgive them for giving away their best bassline ever to some stinkyass commercial. This CD is like one long movie, full of melodrama and sideways glances. Less dance, more mood. Mellow-like. I know a few people who have dissed TNT for whatever reasons but the P-girl is still diggin' it. This was mmm mm upon first listen. (PK)
Thrill Jockey, PO Box 476794, Chicago IL, 60647

Traitors- Stab 'em in the back!, CD

I wanted so much to like this 'cause the lads are nice and they try, but ever since Todd Hoboken left and they seem hell bent to get that crazy hardcore image which just makes me laugh, they just aren't that good. The music nor the live show really do it for me. And on the disc, the vocals aren't angry enough and the overall sound is kinda weak and isn't dirty enough, which really surprises me 'cause Steve Albini did it. They are opening for everyone in Chicago so I am sure all you Chi-town locals will see them, but let's hope that the next release is a lot better. (BC)

Johanns Face Records P.O. Box 479-164 Chicago, IL, 60647

The Trip Daddies - To Hell and Back in a Cadillac, CD

Super cool roots rock and roll in a rockabilly vein. The incredible cover of Eddie Cochran's "Somethin' Else" blew me away, and they're version of "Safety Dance" is definitely rocking. But the cover tunes are only a prelude to some excellent Daddies tunes that had me humming along right away. Fans of early Horton Heat are gonna want to pick this one up. The Trip Daddies are going to get you dancing in a hurry. (harlo)
Rooster Lollipop Records, 4135 Wyoming, St. Louis, MO 63116

Trunk - Throwin' the Horns, CD

Definitely one of the better melodic power pop punk bands, fit for snowboarders and non-snowboarders alike. (MD)
Raw Energy Music, 65 Front Street West Suite #0116-42, Toronto, ON M5J 1E6

THE LETTER U

The Usuals - heart-shaped EP

I'm a sucker for cool packaging—even cheesy gimmicks like this candy apple red heart-shaped EP. Very cool. It even makes me want to like the ska music contained herein—something I usually don't do. The two songs are low-key numbers with smooth female vocals. Enough energy to gets your foot tapping, but mellow enough to sleep to. Even though its ska, I'm giving this record a thumbs up. (SM)
No Idea Records

Turtlehead - I Preferred Their Earlier Stuff, CD

Having not have heard anything else by this Scottish band, I can't the title holds any truth. If they think their earlier stuff is better, then it must be great, because this is well-crafted pop punk of the likes of Snuff. Melodic backing vocals, thick guitar sounds, and catchy tunes. Cool. (MH)
Bad Taste Records; Stora Suderg. 38 222 23 Lund Sweden

The Undead - Till Death, CD

From the creepy world of Underworld Records comes The Undead. Sounding a little like early G.G. and with a touch of The Misfits (ed note: it features Bobby Steele of the Misfits that is why!) thrown in for good measure, it all comes across kinda nicely. Basic riffs and straight ahead beats take you through 13 tunes of this creepy rock. A good way to get back into rock and roll. (BC)
Underworld Records 10738 Millen, Montreal, PQ. H2C 2E6 Canada

The Unmarked Cars/Supergrub - split, CD

This disc contains two tracks by The Unmarked Cars, "2u" and "Stupid girl skank" and two tracks by Supergrub, "Building the bridge" and "destitute." The unmarked cars play third wave MTV punk ska. Supergrub(why do so many ska bands have "super" as part of their name?) are a little bit harder to pigeonhole, playing one un-ska rock number and one slow white guy reggae song. Yahoo. (JK)
215 records, 219 Yorkshire Rd. Fairless Hills, PA 19030 USA

THE LETTER V

The Vapids - Wanna Fuck Around, CD

I am sure that this band would love to hear me say they sound like the Ramones/Queers sound. They do it well, and if it wasn't for the fact that this is being done to death, then you would all know who the Vapids are! Anyways, this is their LP "Wanna Fuck Around" and the EP "Teenage Girls A Go Go" and 13 bonus tracks. I just want to know if they thought that their song "13 Women" wasn't taken half from the old rock and roll classic "13 Women", ha I caught ya... Don't fret though, rock and roll is all about imitation and ripping off other peoples riffs, ideas, lines. This is why you should love the Vapids. (EA)

Box #316.2021 Lakeshore Rd. Burlington Ont. Canada L7R 1A2

The Vendettas - S/T, CD

Rockabilly-ish Garage that is good, good fun. I really dug their last 7 incher and the CD is everything I liked about that (a great guitar sound that is just sloppy enough, without sounding amateur) only longer. yay! The recording sounds a little hollow, but I can't tell if it's intentional, or if it was just recorded over the speaker-phone. (harlo)
360 Twist!, PO Box 9367, Denver, CO 80209

Veteran Flakbox - Living In a Bubble, CD

Ugh. Another Pennywise-sounding band, with speedy beats and "woah-oh"s sung in the background during the chorus. Another bunch of kids emulating Fat Wreck Chords sounds. Another CD I don't want to listen to. (SM)
206 Records, 8314 Greenwood Ave. North, Suite 102, Seattle, WA 98103

Violent Anal Death - 12 song, 7"

A bunch of quick and sloppy nearly unrecognizable punk rock versions of your favorite jingles, TV themes and more. This is raw and fun, but not as well executed as some theme song records. In fact, these are so different than the originals, they might as well be originals. Decent. (MH)
Roachender Records; 91 Simmons Street #2; Providence RI 02909

Violent Society - S/T, 7"

5 songs here that have a great 80's feel to them. I don't know why they appeal to drunk punx, these guys sound like a cleaner version of Negative Approach to me. This 7" has really turned my feelings around about them. Great band, great record, and finally a lyric sheet. Old school sound! (NW)
Creep suite 220 252 E. market St. West Chester PA. 19381

THE LETTER W

Wally - Kill Whitey, CD

First of all, the CD title is hilarious (blame this on my being a fan of the movie Superfly). Wally likes to poke fun at straight-edge quite a bit with song titles like "God Damn Christians and Straightedge Nazis" and "Earth Crisis Plays Bob's Beef And Beer". I'm all for humor and laughing at one's self but the music wasn't interesting enough to keep my ears attentive. This is basic punk influenced rock. In this case, it seems the concept (if there was one) far outweighed the content. (BR)
Creep Records, Suite 220, 252 E. Market St., West Chester, PA 19381

The Weaklings - Four More Reasons to Love, 7"

Very rude, crude and obnoxious ala Humpers. You get half naked girls, faux blowjobs on the packaging and the good rock n' roll on pink vinyl to match. Way better than 90% of the bands trying to do this. I suggest this one in the sea of singles that Junk is finally putting out. Again, Humpers fans take note. (EA)
Junk Records PO Box 1474 Cypress, CA 90630

Weird Lovemakers - Flu Shot, LP

Hmm. I like this band. A lot. I like to see obscure bands I know are good get picked up by larger labels—which is what happened here. Empty heard what I heard—a great first half of their first CD, so good that it warranted

ignoring the ridiculous second half. What is distressing though is the flatness of this record. Still quirky, offbeat garagey punk, but just not booty waggin' good. Look for their earlier CD. It is better. (GG)
Empty Recs.

The Wives - Ripped, LP

Women from NYC doing guy's style RnR—incredibly basic but has some very clear production—somebody put up some dough for this band. Cool shit, but not totally amazing. Very New York sounding—exactly the kind of band you'd expect to see at the Continental playing with the Action Swingers or the Prisstees. (GG)
CBGB 315 Bowery NYC 10003

The Wretched Ones - Tributes Suck, 7"

Cheers to these guys for taking the bull by the horns when they feel like they've been ripped off. This is a record of four cover tracks ('America the Beautiful') recorded for various tribute comps that never showed up like they were supposed to. So they said 'fuck it' and put out their own record. Cool. Drunk cider punk cover songs. (GG)
Headache Recs PO Box 204 Midland Park, NJ 07432

THE LETTER Y

Y - Ali Bomaye, LP

Yes! This band rules! Crazy super fast inventive hardcore with occasional rhythmic breaks and angry vocals. This has some of the most tight, insanely fast drumming I've ever heard. Each song is masterfully written, bound tightly together and seriously blasting from the needle. This is the kind of music that makes you flail around filled with angst but with a smile on your face. It's quirky with guitar chords that jump all over the place, go into somewhat dissonant bridges, then launch into a furious speed attack. Wide variety of lyrical topics from what I'm guessing is a sarcastic but humanistic point of view (in German with brief explanations in English). This is much faster than their earlier stuff so be warned! Live these guys can't fail to disappoint. I really can't say enough good things about this record - one of the best I've heard all year. (KB)
Thought Crime, Thomas Franke, Proskauer Str. 22, 10 247 Berlin, Germany or Anomie, Feldsieper Str. 13, 44809 Bochum, Germany

Young Pioneers/Van Pelt - split, 7"

Another fine young Pioneers record with that crazy country/synth/punk/whatthehell style that we have grown to love. The Van Pelt's smooth voice, and this may be their best, makes this a nice package that any modern collection should contain. Props goes out to Whirled for combining these two bands into a really kick-assessment single. (EA)
Whirled Records PO Box 5431 Richmond, VA 23220

Your Mom - Something for Nothing, CD

If Alice and Chains were fronted by James Hetfield, this is what it would sound like.

Alternative rock nightmare. (harlo)
Do Ray Me, PO box 461617, Los Angeles, CA 90046

Yum Yum Tree - I know who I am, 7"

Good, angry Punk/Hardcore with nice female vocals, good lyrics, nifty Red Vinyl, and a cool temporary tattoo. I dig it. (JK)

Vital Music, PO box 210 NYC 10276 USA

VARIOUS ARTISTS

v/a-Animal Truth, CD

A hardcore compilation that benefits various animal rights groups. It features a track from Statement, the old Hardline band that I thought broke up ages ago. Need I remind people that the tenets of Hardline read an awful lot like the tenets of the religious right? Hardline is explicitly anti-abortion and anti-gay. I don't know if those are the politics of the makers of this comp, but their willingness to overlook what a band like Statement really stands for just because they believe in animal rights too doesn't make me want to support this. (DS)

Sobermind Records PO Box 206 8500 Kortijk Belgium

V/A - Asian Man Records Presents Mailorder is Fun, CD

This is a pretty good sampler of pretty much every band on Asian Man. Mostly third wave punk ska type stuff with a few punk and emo bands thrown in. The ska stuff is pretty average ska punk-Less than Jake type crap, but there are some really good exceptions on here from Let's go Bowling, Slow Gherkin, Shleptones, Johnny Soko, Unsteady, and some band called Monkey. The indy rock-emo stuff isn't all that bad but sounds really out of place on this disc. You get a lot of music on this sampler (29 tracks) but unless you are really into punk ska I wouldn't bother.

Asian Man Records, P.O. box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585

V/A - Back to Rockaway Beach 1, CD

Wow, there are over 25 bands from all over the damn world on this disc. Too many to mention, and I haven't heard of a single one of them, but maybe I should get out more. Lots of styles and all are lots of fun. A good way to expose yourself to new things. (BC)

AMP 92 Kenilworth Ave. S. Hamilton Ontario, Canada L8K 2S9

V/A - Bleeeeeeeeeuuuuurrrrrggggghhh!-7"

The 3rd in a series of humorous short, fast songs by slap a ham records. 73 bands, and 84 songs, each band gets 10 seconds to impress the listener. Funny shit! The standouts on here are Final Conflict, Los

Crudos, MK Ultra, Bronson, and Your Mother. This is a great gem for your collection. (NW)

Slap A Ham PO Box 420843, SF, CA. 94142-0843

V/A - California Hardcore - A Call to Arms, CD

You know how it goes ... the first song on this tough-boy hardcore CD starts out with the trademark "thumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthumpthump crash ... crashcrashcrash." Then the vocals come in and the only thing keeping them from being rap is the fact that they're yelled in a throaty growl. It's NYCHC '87 from CA in '98. Appearing here is Hoods, Powerhouse, AFI, Forced Life, Built to Last, Redemption '87, No Innocent Victim, Downshift, Fury '66, Model American, Second Coming and Ignite. (SM)

Breakout Records, P.O. Box 1464, San Ramon, CA 94583

V/A - Check This Out, Too: One Foot Sampler, CD

As with any sampler, some bands sound better than others. But although the quality of tunes varies from one song to the next, the Punk O Meter stays level at "high" the whole way through this One Foot Records release. If you dig power punk by the likes of Electric Frankenstein, Crank, Gameover, Adhesive, et cetera, then your four dollars will not go to waste. (MD)

One Foot Records, PO box 30666, long beach, ca 90853

V/A - Confederacy of Scum: Supershow Live '97, CD

Biker rock recorded live at The Outhouse in Lawrence, Kansas. I don't know, this many stars-n-bars makes me nervous. Here's the bands: Limecell, Conqueror Worm, Cocknoose, Hellstomper, Rancid Vat, Antiseen, and Cretin 66. They each do 4 or 5 songs, and I didn't like any of them. This whole record left a little knot in stomach. This show was probably pretty scary. Finally, don't cover Johnny Cash, it will never be as good. (harlo)

Boloney Shrapnel. PO Box 6504, Phoenix, AZ 85005

V/A - Erie Hardcore Scene Report, CD

This record features Brothers Keeper, Disciple, Abnegation (the good stuff, when iggy and paul were still in the band), Sumthin' to Prove, and more... This is a pretty cool comp, cause it gives you a chance to hear bands that are new to you, without having to purchase all the original records. I recommend checking it out and hearing some fresh tunes. (EF)

SA-MOB pobox1931 Erie PA 16507-0931

V/A - Far Out Records... and Friends 97 Sampler, CD

A collaboration between two Florida labels - Far Out, Records of Rebellion, and a New Jersey label - Pop Kid. This 23 song CD is mostly melodic pop punk and ska. This is an

excellent sample of some lesser known bands, and is definitely worth the \$4 ppd. they're selling it for. (MH)

Far Out Records; PO Box 14361; Ft Lauderdale FL 33302

V/A - Ha! I kill me!, 7"

So three bands kill me. Well "They live" does the clean pop thing, "the infertile" does the angry hardcore thing, and "flesh eating creeps" do the sloppy garage punk thing. But put them all together and it kills me. Maybe they like this stuff better in Virginia. (BC)

Amendment records 580 Nansemond Cres. Portsmouth, VA. 23707

V/A - I Have No Friends, EP

It's a buncha punk rock, kids. Snotty, abrasive and juvenile. Only one of the eight bands on this nine-song record play poppy music (The Cretins). All of them have a sense of humor. All of them are also from either Boston or Providence. The best song award goes to Violent Anal Death, who cover the Slinky commercial. Runner up goes to Gringo for "Kill your mother, kill your father." Also appearing are Mung, Bastard Squad, The Maggots, The Degenerates and Bratface. I like this one. (SM)

Fat Einstein Records, P.O. Box 7531, Quincy, MA 02269-7531

V/A - It's All So Quiet on the Eastern Front, LP

This is a comp LP of mostly European bands, current and past. The music ranges from bizarre noise and samples (Sabotaggio) to charged hardcore (Final Warning) to metallic SxE HC (Congress) to melodic (Fichissimo) to crust (Cripple Bastards). One of my current favorites DDI has a crazy track on here with kazoo (these folks are brilliant!). Some big names include Larm and Battle of Disarm though the Larm song is live and the BOD song is too long. My favorites would have to be DDI and the Endless Hate (Slovenia) tracks. Just as this comp is all over the punk genre map, so is the sound quality. I actually had to skip two tracks because they were of un-listenable quality. Although I scoured the packaging I could not find an address (I think this was supposed to come with a zine called "La Solita Minestra" which I didn't get). I think the label/organization that put this out is called Nuclearsunpunk if that helps. Overall, I'd say this has some good tracks but is pretty dodgy in quality. (KB)

Nuclearsunpunk, Casella Postale 114, 34170 Gorizia, Italy

v/a-More than Music, 10"

10" comp of Chicago-area bands that is politically right-on ("Punk rock continues to persist as an underground alternative form of music because of its independence from major corporations that have come to have a hand in every aspect of life in which they can make a bunch off of, from cars to pet rocks.") Plus, all the music is really great. Put your support

behind this. Features tracks from Spy vs. Spy, Baxter, Trepan Nation, The Letterbombs and more... (DS)

Lance Harbor Records 1960 Swindon Pl. Hoffman Estates, IL 60195

V/A - New York's Hardest #2, CD

This CD has some cool bands on it...but it just fell short of my acceptance. I'm not sure what it is, it's just dull and without emotion. It's one of those records that you buy and listen to when you first get it, and then let it collect dust for the next two years, when it gets lost under your bed and later you accidentally step on it and don't even remember having it in the first place. 25 ta life, Reach, Stealth, Sons of Abraham, SFA, Indecision, and more...(EF)

Black Pumpkin records 61 East 8th street New York, NY. 10003

V/A - On Tour Without a Band, CD

A spoken word CD, that is worth buying, better than Rollins or Biafra (nevermind the non-punk spoken word things). I have enjoyed Rich Mackin's zines for quite awhile now, and he knows he isn't the first to do this, but. You get a snippet of six letters and responses of funny letters he sent out to big companies. It is worth the price of this CD (and to bad it wasn't all Rich on this one) alone, especially the Lever 2000 escapade. Clay Fernald is a little too hip-hoppin space punk promoting anarchy, peace, and brotherly love for me. I have seen a lot of spoken word kids like him at shows and I don't find it that interested, motivating or clever like Rick Mackin, but a lot of people find this stuff funny, so. Duncan Johnson is the third up, and he sounds like/and talks about things just like the early Rollins spoken word. Finally, Antony Flackett has a beat/rap thing that is at least original, and funny enough. So overall you got one really good (Rich), one okay (Clay), one good but too Rollins like (Duncan) and a decent rap artist (Tony).

Buy it for Rich and order his zines. (EA)
Red Backpack PO Box 108, Upton, MA 01568

v/a-Our Own Way, CD

A CD that sets out to document the current state of hardcore and does a pretty admirable job of it. As opposed to a lot of hardcore comps that encapsulate only a certain sound within the genre or a certain town or scene, this brings in bands from all over the world and all over the musical spectrum. Features exclusive tracks (or demo tracks) from Agnostic Front, Fastbreak, Ensign, In My Eyes, Killing Time, Redemption 87, Good Riddance, Heckle and more. (DS)

Blackout Records PO Box 1575 NYC NY 10009

V/A - Pale Incompetence, 7"

This 7" features five bands: The Humdingers, Sidekick Kato, The Bizarro Philharmonic, Cheer Accident, and Fink. Quite a variety of assorted sounds exists in these bands, and I would recommend this 7" to punkers who feel that they need a bit of spice in their life. (MD)

Bizarre Records, 326 Julie Lane, Hampshire, Ill, 60140

V/A - Playing the Dickies, 7"

Two great French bands doing two great Dickies covers all on a frilly pink record! Garlic Frog Diet (the first dirty French band) do a great poppy job of "Fan Mail." And Deadly Toys (the second rude French band) do a blistful "Mannie Moe & Jack." A must for any fan of Dickies or the French. (BC)

Sideline records 9rue, Childebort, 69002 Lyon, France. 04 78 42 92 81

V/A - Pretty In Pop, CD

The subtitle reads: "Songs from the films of John Hughes." Hello! I think I like this already. The Bonaduces, Ninety-Nine (ex-Gold Cold Hearts! ex-Sleater-Kinney!), Speedbuggy, Ciao Bella, and b'ehl respectively cover Flesh For Lulu, Echo and the Bunnymen, The Psychedelic Furs, The Thompson Twins, and Simple Minds. I'll let you use your retroactive memory to guess at the song titles. They're all goodies though. It annoys me when major labels put out pseudo-cashcow 80's nostalgia comps. The sincerity seems to be non-existent. Not here tho, nope! I particularly enjoyed the faux-Brit accents. (PK)

Endearing, PO Box 69009, Winnipeg MB, R3P 2G9
Canada <http://www.mbnnet.mb.ca/~endear>

V/A - Punk Rock, CD

Clever title. "Punk rock" features 4 bands.. Carter Peace Mission (sing-a-long happy short song- Beatles of punk-type like Pansy Div. meets Cletus), Veteran Flashback (Fat Wreck type that rocks a little harder, but sounds like a weak recording of early 88 Fingers Louie), The Throw Downs (another "fast as we can play" band with weak vocals) and Belvedere (pretty decent punk but might be better live, they do a "facts of life" cover.) So we have learned this about Seattle. 75% of the singers are boring and lame, the grunge era must have killed the scene, and no one does good covers anymore. (BC)

Two-o-Six records 8314 Greenwood Ave. north suite 102 Seattle, WA. 98103

V/A - Punk Til Ya Puke, CD

Hmm. Not sure that I support this idea. A bunch of bands from AZ, one from NJ, and one from CA (each with multiple tracks) on one CD. In theory, they each could easily have put out their own 7". Instead, they were kind to the environment and combined their efforts into one disc. It definitely has some

variety, although each band seems to be fairly melodic, and typical for modern punk youth, borrows from styles as diverse as pop and HC. I don't know that I'd jump off my arse for it—more enjoyment could be easily gotten for free by watching RAW, Nitro, or the Magic Hour. Regardless, some folks might want to check out Veteran Flashback, who have an LP forthcoming from 206 and sound to me like Blink on steroids. (GG)

Bad Stain Records PO Box 35254 Phoenix, AZ 85069

V/A - Punk Uprisings Vol. 2, CD

Great long liner notes, and 39 bands, all live or previously unreleased. Here is a small list, please understand that you already know if you want this: Bouncing Souls, Atom and his Package, H2O, I Farm, In/Humanity, Rizzo Machine, Anal Cunt, Discount, Lunachicks, Snapcase, Submachine, etc. (EA)

Go Kart PO Box 20 Prince Street Station NY, NY 10012

V/A - The Right To Assemble, 7"

At first, I thought this compilation was for benefit but the more I looked into packaging, I believe I was wrong. The bands featured, all from New Jersey, are The Degenerics (snotty punk rock a la F.Y.P.), Stormshadow (punk with yelled / screamed vocals and better musicianship), Heidnik Stew (NYHC done skinhead style), Fanshen and Try.Fail.Try. (decent punk rock) and Worthless (snotty pop punk in the vein of NOFX). All in all, this compilation is pretty mediocre. The benefit concept may have made it more appealing. (BR)

Right To Assemble, P.O. Box 68, Jamesburg, NJ 08831

V/A - Runt of the Litter, Vol. 3, CD

Thirty-nine punk bands from New England check in on this CD. The styles range from pop-punk to trash to melodic to crusty to snotty and all sorts of things. Some songs really really suck, a few aren't bad, but none really jumped out at me. The bands: Where's Ben?, The Dislexics, Poor and Neglected, The Sqwags, The Injections, The Maggots, Frigate, Bottom, The Useless Fucks, Indolents Legion, The Pipsqueeks, Family Fun, Sorry Excuse, The Nasties, Buzzard, Girl on Top, Stalking Leaver, Agent 84, Average Suburbanites, Shitfit, Downfall, The Stalkers, Dr. Smooth, 25 Liars, Philth Shack, Sanity Assassins, Darkbuster, Alley Sway, 30 Seconds Over Tokyo, Social Rebellion, Spork, Black Rose Garden, Clepto, The Doosh Bags, The Lamebrains, Zippo Raid, Aberrant Youth, The C Street Crew. (SM)

Fan Attic Records, P.O. Box 391494, Cambridge, MA 02139-0015

V/A - Saved by the Bail, CD

Two bands Tone Deaf Pig Dogs and No Class share this disc of angry young energetic music. Your basic 3 chord Georgian punk rock. The cover has that cool Stereocolonic logo on it. Some of the song titles like "My Dick is too Small," take balls to sing. I guess if the boys wanted to see who I liked better, then I'd have to say that No Class is just a half point ahead. (BC) Hospital Records 812 Holcomb Bridge rd. Nercross, GA. 30071

V/A - Skanarchy III, CD

The third volume in the Skanarchy series starts off with Against All Authority covering Propagandhi's "Ska Sux", which becomes increasingly more accurate the longer you listen to this album. Interestingly enough, only about half of this CD is actually ska. Ok, I'm just going to come right out and say it: ska-punk or punk-ska or ska-core or whatever the hell you want to call it is NOT ska. That's not necessarily a bad thing; there are some songs on this album that I like, but they aren't ska songs, they're just punk rock with an upbeat guitar. Now I'm not trying to say that a band who wants to be a ska band has to narrow themselves into a tight little definition. There comes a point, however, when you are so far removed from the original genre that the tenuous ties of fashion and common instruments become the only things connecting you to it. All the horns and all the ties and all the pick-it-ups in the world aren't going to change that. I point to one artist on this compilation, Venice Shoreline Chris; one man with an acoustic guitar, no horns, no tie; just the ska, now that's a beautiful thing. (harlo) Elevator Music, PO Box 1502, New Haven, CT 06511

V/A - The Soundtrack Generation & The Young Nerds Generation, CD

This is a pretty damn shwank comp of songs taken from other albums on this raunchily delicious label. The old meets new. From funk to camp to pop to metal. Jerry Van Rooyen, Gert Wilden, Teo Uselli, Ubaldo Continello, Plainfield, etc...it's all a romp 'n' stompin' good time. Did I hear someone say S-E-X?? La la la. My pal Trish and I have a date to rent "Schoolgirl Report", aw yeah! (PK) Crippled Dick Hot Wax, PO Box 3864, 78027 VS-Schwenningen, Germany <http://www.crippled.com>

V/A - Strange Cargo, CD

I never realized what a wide variety of music Cargo puts out or distributes, but this comp confirms it. Having said that, you can probably guess what the potential problem this presents. Chances are you may only like a few of the tracks on this CD. It really runs the gambit though, from Linus Pauling Quartet, to Oxyoron, to The Meteors, to Greenhouse. Truly a track for any occasion. (harlo) Cargo Records America

v/a-Swamp Surfing In Memphis, CD

Awesome compilation of low-fi Memphis garage/blues bands. The liner notes do a good job of placing this comp in a historical context and the music does a nice job updating blues while remaining very true to the roots. This almost seems like a Folkways record more than a punk record—that's a good thing. The stand-out on the comp is She Wolf, a one-woman band who adds a ton of authenticity to this project. (DS) Au Go Go GPO Box 542d Melbourne Vic 5001 Australia

V/A - This is Bad Taste volume 2, CD

This is a big sampler from Bad Taste records, a label out of Sweden. Most of the stuff on here is pretty heavy punk and hardcore, with stuff by the Satanic Surfers, Astream, Misconduct, Pridebowl, Everyday Madness, the Almighty Trigger Happy, and a bunch of other bands. While the punk and hardcore stuff isn't bad, the only stuff I really liked on here were the two surf songs by a band called the Langhorns, who kick some major butt. Along with the music this CD also has a interactive CD-ROM portion, which unfortunately I could not get to work except for a couple of stupid music videos. It's too bad, because there is supposedly a Langhorns video game, which would have been cool to see. Oh well. Check this out. (JK) Bad Taste Records, Sorta Sodergatan 38, 222 23 Lund, Sweden

v/a-Twenty Band Comp, CD

It is what it says it is. 20 bands on a comp. All of these songs are available elsewhere. If you like really simple hardcore and are too lazy to go pick up all the records these songs first appeared on, then this is for

you. Bands include Frenzal Rhomb, Random Killing, Five Finger Discount, and 16 more. (DS) Raw Energy Music 65 Front St. W. Suite 0116-42 Toronto, ON M5J 1E6 CANADA

V/A - Wear Your Smell, LP

This is a benefit LP for animal liberation groups and comes with a huge vegan cookbook that is (unfortunately for me) in German. My favorite tracks have to be DDI (frenetic Italian punk), Frammenti (melodic angst), Distress (charged Dis-punk), Drop Dead (fast crust), Stalker (super fast punk), and Ebola (the British one). Other well-known names include Hiatus, Sawn Off, Hard to Swallow, State of Fear, Dystopia (crappy live track), and Active Minds. There are of course some throwaways but the diversity of musical styles and general political nature of the bands makes for a cohesive comp. The packaging is quite nice - the insert is in the form of an A4 booklet with more or less a page from each band. I just wish I could read the cookbook. (KB) Barbara Schroder, Gross Beerenstr. 67, 14482 Potsdam, Germany

V/A - Welcome to Skannecticut, CD

I think I've said this before, but I'm going to say it again. Now everyone say it with me: Comps Based on Geography Just Don't Work! Let's assume you are trying to put together a ska comp, and let's assume you use a narrow area whose "scene" you think is worth representing. You're only going to find one or two exemplary bands in that genre in that area of the world. (On this CD, that's Ska King Crab (who I usually don't dig, but they do a fantastic rendition of Glen Miller's "Pennsylvania 6-5000") Then you'll find some really crappy bands. Then you'll throw in unreleased material from bands that broke up (usually there's a reason these people didn't release this stuff themselves). I don't know, I guess hometown pride is good, but I don't particularly care which ska bands come from Connecticut, I just want to dance. (harlo) Elevator Music, PO Box 1502, New Haven, CT 06511

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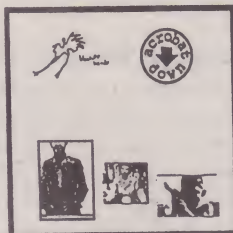
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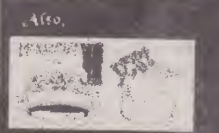
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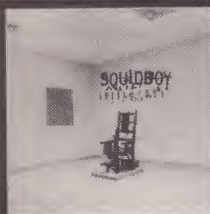
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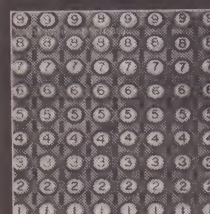
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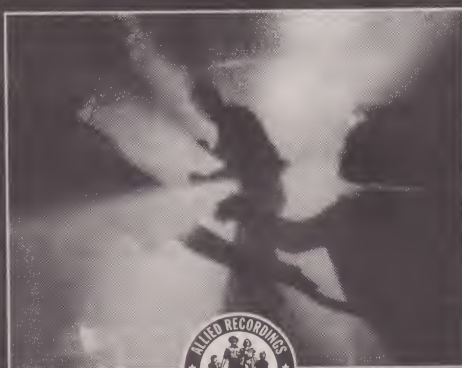


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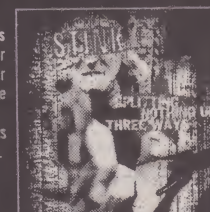
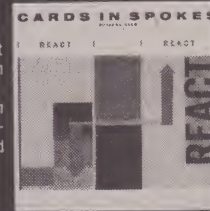
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DISTRO INFERNO

You can make the best film in the world, but getting people to see it usually takes twice as long or even more. On the DIY tip, I'm happy to notice a lot of action around homemade video labels, very much in the tradition of punk rock record labels. This element of filmmaking is really important. A few years ago I was on a panel with Jeff Lipsky who started October Pictures (which he sold to big corporations and now they won't release Todd Solonz's [of *Welcome to the Dollhouse* fame] new film, *Happiness*, because it's too controversial-but that's another story). I was so inspired because Jeff was saying there are so many people who want to be filmmakers, but there's not enough theaters or distribution outlets to release all of their films. He urged people to become more involved in alternative exhibition and distribution if a healthy, real independent film scene is to survive. Besides, back when a lot of the established indie companies started, they were younger and played to a younger audience. A lot of these people have gotten older and the audiences they're targeting are the baby boomer yuppie types. That's why it's so great, and so important, to see other punks and artists starting their own distribution companies as well as making films.

Seeing a need for non-academic, non-film festival venues, *Peripheral Produce* challenges how film and video is to be viewed and created... *Peripheral Produce* is 100 percent science action pop bomb abstract aesthetics. I first met Matt McCormick through Russ Forster (*So Wrong They're Right*, *An Incredible Simulation*) in

Olympia as when I was roadieing for Sam Green on his *Rainbow Man* tour. Matt had put on a lot of really cool compilation shows around the Northwest, got good press coverage for the films and played to sold out crowds. He was talking about releasing experimental video comps and in the few months I've known him, he's actually done what he said he would do. And he's doing it well. Now *Peripheral Produce* is also a video label. His releases include: *Auto-Cinematic Mix Tape*, an ambitious mix tape featuring shorts by Negativland, Russ Forster, Miranda July, Vanessa Renwick, Animal Charm, The Olympia Film Ranch plus much more (70 min, \$14); *Animal Charm*, which is five shorts by Chicago experimental video guys who call themselves Animal Charm (formerly known as Janet Anglo Saxon Jackson, aka Jim Fetterly and Rich Bott)-watch in November for their American punk rock film tour!; *Fire Escapes, Seagulls* (29 min. \$10), which are short abstract films by Matt McCormick himself, including *Stain*, an amazing throbbing ultra-video experience, as well as his excellent music video for the band Scared of Chaka. He also distributes work by Scott Arford, Craig Baldwin and Russ Forster. For more info e-mail matum-pro-duce@e-mail.msn.com or write to Rodeo Film Company, P.O. Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240. Send a SASE for a full catalog. If you want to submit films/videos to the series, send tapes with relevant info and \$5 entry fee made out to Rodeo Filmco and allow 6 to 8 weeks for a response.

A few columns back I wrote about Big Miss Moviola (aka Miranda July), who does a girl-fueled distribution company. Well, congrats

ulations are in order because she just got a big grant from The Andrea Frank Foundation. She's got a new tape out, *Joanie 4 Jackie 4Ever* with films by Sativa Peterson, Fiona Saunders, the Daughters of Houdini, Myra Paci, Yoriko Washiyama, Miranda July herself and Dulcie Clarkson's *How The Miracle Of Masturbation Saved Me From Becoming a Teenage Space Alien* (see past columns). Right fucking on! Write to Big Miss Moviola, P.O. Box 14284 Portland, OR 97293, or e-mail mjuly@europa.com for more info.

If you haven't heard of Jack Stevenson, please take special notice now. This guy is such an inspiration to alternative distributors everywhere. In years past he would just grab a bunch of found films, throw them in a car and hit the road. Instead of distributing his own films, he collects everything from Mormon films to anti-LSD films to pornos to American underground classics (including films by Craig Baldwin, Jon Moritsuigu, Danny Plotnick, Greta Snider, Jerri Cain Rossi, Charles Gatewood and more!) and showcases them all over the world. He used to have screening series in seedy bars in Boston and San Francisco and he put out three incredible issues of *Pandemonium*, an early underground film magazine with interviews with underground figures like John Waters and his cast, George and Mike Kuchar and Tod Browning (*Freaks*). These magazines are almost impossible to find now, but Jack put out his essays on Waters and the Kuchars in the book *Desperate Visions: Camp America* from Creation Books. A few years back he moved to Denmark where he can fully support himself



UNDERGROUND

from his wacked-out film distribution, exposing Northern Europe to the weirdest celluloid to come out of the United States. Jack is a terrible purist: He only accepts 16mm, but it comes from a dedicated passion to the cinematic format, for better or for worse. He hates video. I'm not sure how he gets to see new films but you can contact him at: Uglevang 88 2th 3450 Allerod, Denmark, or fax him at 011 0045-4814603.

And speaking of Creation Books, we in the Bay Area are lucky enough to enjoy the company of Jack Sargeant for the summer as he is involved with Creation Books, USA (their headquarters are in England). He's working on the following upcoming releases:

- Jim Van Bebber's *Charlie's Family Book*-the script, plus illustrations, plus an appendix by Jim Morton, plus an intro by Jack Sargeant himself
- Bev Zalcov's *Renegade Sisters*-a book on girl gangs movies, from camp comedies like *St. Trinian's* through to women in prison films, plus includes a BIG section on *A Gun For Jennifer!!*
- Necronomicon II*-essays on weird horror movies
- Destroy*-a big Sex Pistols photo book of unseen pics by photographer Dennis Morris (OK, so it's not film but it is punk!)
- Suture vol 1* by Jack Sargeant-including interviews and essays on Lydia Lunch, Romain Slocombe, Mark Hejnar, and John Hillcoat (*Ghosts Of The Civil Dead*)

Contact him at PO Box 13512, Berkeley, CA 94712, or call 510 540 7937.

Fairy tales do happen. As a lot of you know, I made a movie called *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* a while back that I've been showing around for the last year. During all this time, I didn't have one chance to show my film in my hometown of San Francisco except for a cast/crew/sneak screening where my lab (at the time) fucked up the sound so badly that it was a garbled mess, a bad thing for a dialogue-heavy movie. Back to the recent past, none of the hipster indie film houses would show *Mary Jane*, not even for a weekend, and even showing for one day would entail my getting on my knees and begging. Luckily for me, the new artistic director of Artists Television Access (ATA), Heather Marie Perry, thought that it was ridiculous that I couldn't show my film in San Francisco. After working it out, I was able to get five days and seven shows at the alternative art space. Thank you Heather Marie! ATA seats about 85 people and doesn't usually do shows longer than one night. The programming is very experimental and underground and the shows are cheaper than normal movies. So the *Mary Jane* run was a totally new thing.

I went crazy with the publicity, especially since I was waiting to do this for practically two years! Hot off my Northwest tour, I came back to San Fran with Peripheral Produce King Matt McCormick in tow. Matt came down to meet with the aforementioned Animal Charm, a band-esque a name for video makers Rich Bott and Jim Fetterley, who makes these really freaky collage-type videos that are very strange and surreal. Matt wanted to hook up with them,

by Sarah Jacobson

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being their distributor and all. They were in town for a screening at Craig Baldwin's experimental film series *Other Cinema* that happens at ATA. My mom and I met Rich and Jim by running into them on the street. We hadn't been introduced by Matt yet and once they told us they weren't doing anything at the moment, my mom immediately put them to work covering Valencia Street with fliers. Matt not only put up fliers all over San Francisco, but also risked death, getting up on a 12 foot ladder to tape cardboard over the skylights at ATA. Thanks guys!

Our premiere show on Wednesday was sold out. Then two shows on Thursday. By Friday's shows there were lines around the block and a lot of people were starting to be turned away. It was insane. My mom was running the door, Heather Marie was projecting, and my sister was stamping hands. This great lady, Molly, who has been involved with ATA for years, helped with crowd control. The whole thing was like a carnival. Once our run was over, 900 people had come to see *Mary Jane* and all of our shows, including two last minute added ones, were sold out. The film had done so well and had gotten so much press and good word of mouth that we were able to move *Mary Jane* over to Landmark's Opera Plaza Cinema where the film played for another three weeks. It was like a Cinderella story.

The lesson here? Don't give up. To me, showing your film is the most important part of filmmaking. It's hard and it takes a long time and sometimes I wonder if I'll ever get to make another film again, but ultimately it's worth it.

Stuff like this doesn't happen without help. Thanks to people like Pat Maley and the ACC House in Olympia, James Stockstill and Greg Watjen in Seattle, Chloe from Reading Frenzy (support her store-zines and alternative magazines!), Marne Lucas and Matt McCormick in Portland, everyone who helped put up fliers in San Francisco, and most importantly, everyone who came to the shows in the last few months!

Check out the ATA Web site at www.ata-site.org or if you're in San Francisco, ATA is located at 992 Valencia Street (at 21st), SF, CA 94110. Write in if you want to be on their mailing list.

Some Hints on DIY Shows: You can show films/videos at an art gallery, a music club, or even the side of a building. Just get your technical shit together. If there isn't a video projector, VCR, or film projector at the space, ask around until you find something and someone

who is VERY familiar with working it. Bring it in a few days earlier and test it for viewing and sound, especially sound. If people can't hear it, they'll turn off way faster than if the image is really crappy. Make sure that you find a place for the projector/TV where it won't be blocked if people are walking around (like in a bar with everyone going to get drinks all the time). I always have someone else running the projector. There's so much else going on that I can't concentrate on the little details. Also important is to have someone you trust handling the door and maybe a few other volunteer friends who will help with the ushering if the space is small.

As for getting people to come, I strongly believe in a well-made poster that lists the place, how much, show times and play dates really clearly. Putting up fliers takes a lot of time and there's no reason to waste it by putting the fliers up and having them be so shitty that no one looks at them. If you can't design one, get a friend to help you. Fliers in the neighborhood where your audience lives or hangs out are totally essential. Also, you can make up a press release that states the essential information very clearly. You can include a photo if you can afford it. Mail it to all the local newspapers and, if you have the time and the gumption, make a follow up call in a few days. Before you mail stuff off, check out current issues and notice which writers write about stuff that is similar to what you do and send them a personal press release, maybe with a little note. Don't assume that if you send one press release to a paper that everyone will see it.

Other people get a little more elaborate with food, drink and parties, etc., but that's all up to you and your budget. It's easier if you can have your film in an established place where people are used to going, but it's not always necessary. Try to get your films out to the communities you're familiar with. You don't need to go after the typical movie audience. Good luck!

For more distro excitement, look out next column for info on Mr. Lady, the video-record distribution company formed by Tammy Rae Carland (from *I Heart Amy Carter* zine fame) and Kaia Wilson (from *Kaia*).

You can contact me at Station Wagon Productions, P.O. Box 471807, San Francisco, CA 94147 or e-mail me at SWPchick@aol.com. Check out the *Mary Jane* Web site at www.sirius.com/~lenny/maryj2.html ©



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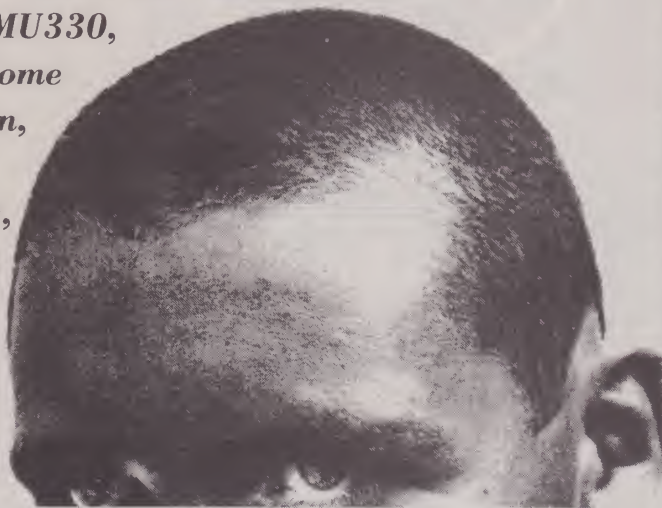
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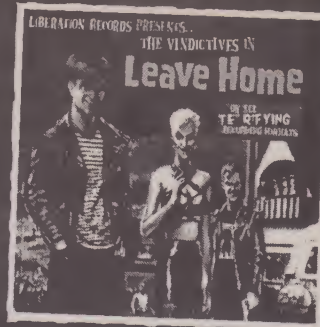
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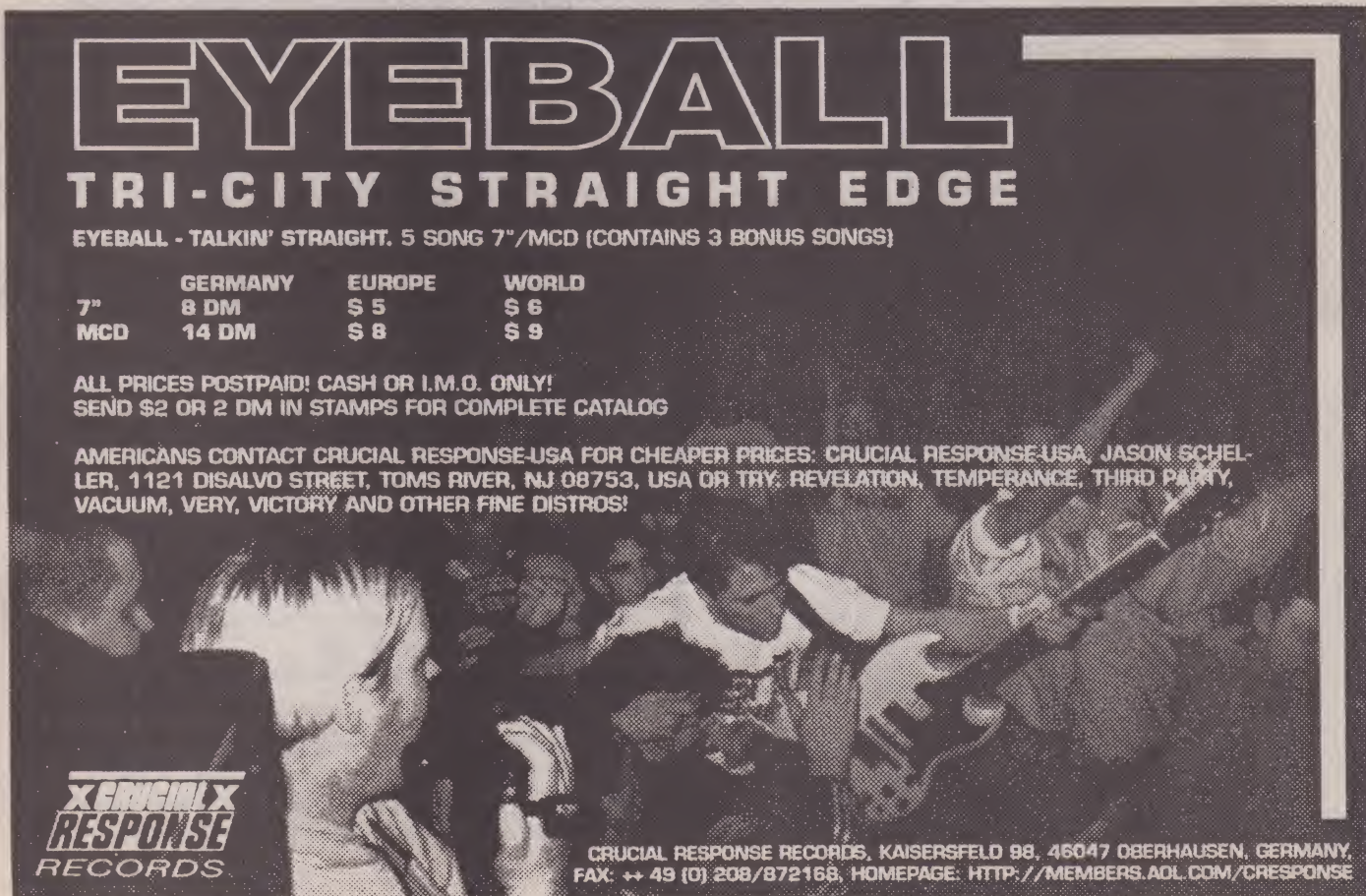
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Fanzine Reviews

Always remember:
just 'cause a reviewer doesn't like 'em doesn't mean they're not good (although sometimes it does).

This issue's reviewers:

Brain Czarnik (BC),

Brian Ryder (BR)

Dan Sinker (DS)

Eric Action (EA)

Josh Kermiet (JK)

Jason Schreurs (JS)

Kim Bae (KB)

Patti Kim (PK)

Scott MacDonald (SM)

407 #3

Molly Grabill, editor of 407 is a great writer, and if I have a major complaint about 407 it's that she devotes too much space to writing that isn't hers! The best part of this zine is the compilation of punk rock stars that talk about their first kiss. It's so much fun to read all these little paragraphs of awkwardness and excitement. (DS) \$2; 1809 N. Flagler Dr. Apt J-8 W. Palm Beach, FL 33407

7-11, #5

The first thing I liked about this zine was the cover, a really cool pen and ink drawing of a man and a monster. The next thing I liked about this zine was the zine itself, a really cool personal zine with good writing and a nice variety of stories. There section analyzing AC/DC lyrics which is hilarious, and surprisingly insightful. Along with the AC/Dc story there is one about the joys of Kool - Aid, another about the joys of being a carnivore (sorry vegans) , a horrible religious comic , and a bunch of other cool stuff and stories. I like how many different topic's are covered in this zine, everything from math to shoplifting. A really cool zine, well worth checking out. (JK)

Grist Milling, PO box
771402 Lakewood, OH
44107 50 cents

Abus Dangereux, April/May 97

This is a the ten-year anniversary issue of this slick zine written entirely in French-a language which, unfortunately for this review, I pretty much failed in high school. It's laid out well, packed with content, has interviews with 16 Horsepower, Bastard, Young Gods, Unwound, New Christs, Tantrum, The Make Up, Straw Dogs, Hellacopters and the Descendents, and it comes with a compilation CD (see record reviews). A cool project which I can't read a word of. (SM)

\$5; BP 172, 82001, Montauban Cedex, France

Action! (Sty zine #25)

The first time I leafed through this I was pretty disappointed. This is a collection of photos done by Icki from Sty zine who admits he threw it together in a weekend and it shows. Some of the photos seem to be included just so the zine wouldn't be too thin and there are multiple pho-

tos of some bands taken from obviously the same angle that were just not really necessary. However, there are some really good photos in here and even some amazing ones that are generally reproduced pretty well. It's always nice to see a photo zine or book but this definitely could have been a lot better if some thought had actually gone into it. (KB)

Migraine, Ian Lynam, PO Box 2337, Berkeley, CA 94702

Ail #2

I really don't know exactly what this is all about but I think it is pretty cool. Ail is a little zine that is laid out sort of like a crazy religious pamphlet, with all kinds of crazy cut and paste religious propaganda and wacky stories. My favorite is the one about the housewife who looses all of her hair and finds a new faith in God, its hilarious. All of the humor in here is really weird, and probably not for everyone. However, if you want a really bizarre and original read, this is the zine for you. Recommended. (JK)

Ail c/o Ken Switzer 94 Tyler #6 Boston, MA 02111

Amusing Yourself to Death #2

Here it is, a smaller Factsheet five with longer zine reviews. For those three of you who haven't heard of Factsheet Five, it's an all-zine-review zine, essentially, and an important resource. I'm glad to see this one for a cou-

ple reasons-it's smaller in scale and scope (FF5 does get a little unwieldy) and the editor writes really long reviews. You can tell the guy has read the zines and really cares about them, and about small press in general. Plus, it's monthly. Thumbs up. (SM)

Ruel Gaviola, P.O. Box 91934, Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1934 \$2

Animal Trap #2

Wow, I've gotten so many awesome art zines to review this issue. Animal Trap may be the best of the bunch, featuring these delicate, frail line drawings of people with a few choice words scattered around them. Every few pages there will also be a little story about the Midwest. Zines like this remind me of how creative and talented so many punks really are. (DS)

\$3; PO Box 11351 Oakland, CA 94611

Asswhine

This is a pretty thick comic zine (48 pages) done by Carrie McNinch of the Assassin and the Whiner fame. The comics definitely reflect a fucked up, insecure, and paranoid personality. It kind of bares nakedly all the parts of ourselves that we would probably rather ignore and pretend didn't exist. It's all very personal but ranges from little stories about daily life to deep emotional trauma. Although she definitely has a certain style she doesn't seem to restrict herself to it too much so we have a pretty diverse little package here

but not so diverse that there is no cohesiveness. This is excellent. (KB)

Migraine, Ian Lynam, PO Box 2337, Berkeley, CA 94702

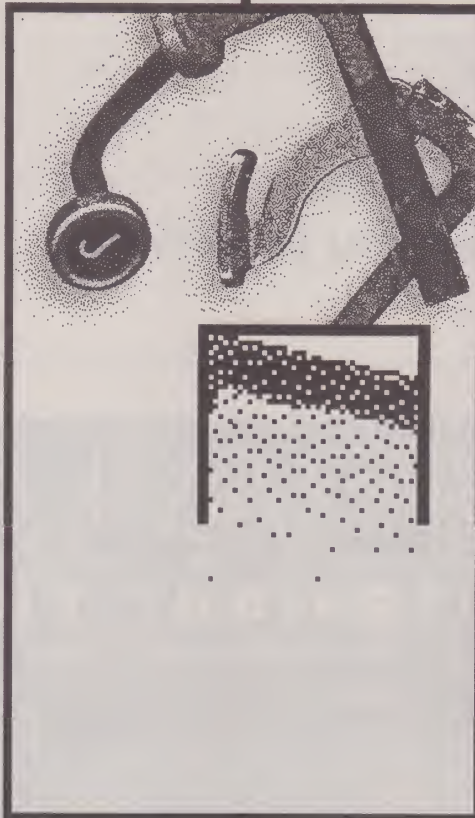
Avow #8

This zine is so jam-packed it took me a good little while to take everything in. Avow is all about the letter P. The political, the personal, the punkrock, the poo. Okay, maybe not the poo, but it's all the rest and then some. I especially dug Keith's short stories and Theo Witsell's column. Compelling reads if not a tad disheartening. (PK)

\$2 ppd.; Keith Rosson, PO Box 832, Westport WA. 98595

Black Cat 13! #1

Putting the F back into Fanzine, this ghoulish delight is all about the horror/monster flick. This guy knows his stuff and shows his love for the genre accordingly. Well-written and an awesome layout to boot. A must-get for any fellow fan. Still an entertaining read for non-fans. I kinda wish there



were more articles and less ads but ah well. Terrorizingly ghastly good time! Undead indeed. (PK)

\$1 + 2 stamps; Tim, 5045 Piccadilly Dr., Madison WI, 53714

Black Sheets #13

This big and thick and smooth gay'ish zine cums with loads of info on dicks, condoms, clubs and dicks. Not for the young at heart. But why do these sexy zines cost so damn much! (BC)

\$6.00 P.O. Box 31155 San Francisco, CA. 94131-0155

Blowing up the Death Star, #1

Blowing up the death star is a small zine created by a couple who just wanted to create a zine for the sake of creating a zine, and who can argue with that? I like the results. Blowing up the death star has a nice layout, good writing, and some very nice cut and paste artwork. It is a little low on content, but that really doesn't matter too much. I get the feeling by reading this that it is a one time deal, which is too bad, because it's pretty good. Keep it up. (JK)

Jacob 4621 43 pl. NW Washington D.C. 20016 or Caroline 31 Yellowstone CT, Walnut Creek, CA 94598 2 stamps

Book of Letters #9

Rev. Richard J. Mackin is back with the ninth installment of "Book of Letters". Though Mackin is as clever as ever, it seems as if he is getting less replies or is printing more letters w/o replies. Either way, this takes some fun away from the zine. I do appreciate his strong will to continue and his spoken word on the "On Tour without a Band" CD reviewed in this issue, is outstanding. You will laugh, though I felt that \$2 would have been a little steep for this issue to stand on its own. Regardless if you haven't read his zine, its basically the old act of writing letters to big companies about funny observations (in his case, well written hilarious observations) about their advertisements or commercials and sending em off. Normally he gets no reply or a typical form letter in return, but once in awhile they at least appear to take him seriously and that is when it gets the most fun. (EA)

\$2 plus \$1 S&H, PO Box 890 Allston, MA 02134

Bowling Ball Trinnastics #1

A good messy cut and paste zine with personality. It's got little stories and art and reviews and cool stuff and interviews with Garden Variety and Jawbreaker. But probably the best thing about this zine is the tape that comes with it-possibly the most eclectic mixed tape I've ever heard. It's perfect for short-attention-span people, with no sound byte more than about 20 seconds. And the subject matter runs the gamut-from clips of rap songs to bits of kid's stories to classical music to three lines from a Bikini Kill song to slices of conversation ... it's deranged. Very cool. (SM)

14865 SW 104 St. Apt. 23, Miami, FL 33196 \$1

Breathing Iced-Tea Mix #4

I think this is one of my favorite new zines. Sean Ennis is a very cool boy whose personal anecdotes and funny drawings will make you smile. The best is his lack of remorse for having had a sex dream about a certain rap queen. Wicked. Short 'n' sweet and totally worth your piddly stamp. Like your teacher always said "quality, not quantity". I cannot recommend this enough, aight! (PK)

1 stamp; 8420 Bridle Rd., Philadelphia PA, 19111

Chiaras / Grundig #3

This package is actually two separate zines that came together. Grundig; I believe, is the main part of the zine which seems to have more of an appeal

to the average zine reader. From what I gather, the content is mostly about the author's travels in Mexico backed by handwritten pages and various artwork. Chiaras is geared towards the history and present struggles of the Zapatistas. The bulk content gives concise detail on the Zapatista struggle, followed by a personal account by the author of their excursion into Zapatista territory for the building of a school. Altogether, I found these zines to have something for almost anyone, unless you are among those interested in music first. (BR)

\$2 or free to prisoners; 2510 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202

Cholesterol Junkie #8

A review section that contains c.d.'s and teachers that the guy has had. "Choose your own criminal adventure" was fun, and it took me back to the days of choosing your own adventure in where I would always cheat on those damn lil' books. A large letters to the editor section and some other kinda neat material. This might be his last issue, so give em' some money. (BC)

2 stamps P.O. Box 116 Long Lake, MN. 55356

Chumpire #97 & #98

Greg Knowles is thee one-page zine masta. I'm gonna buy him a

cherry coke once he hits that 100 mark. Witty and succinct writing make this what it is. Dig the dumb dog stories here. The sweet rural like is treating Greg well I see, heh. Whenever I'm going through PA and I see the green signs for "Conneaut" whiz on by, I think to myself "chumpire". And then I wonder if you just can't see the town from the Interstate. Heehee. (PK)

1 stamp; PO Box 680, Conneaut Lake PA, 16316-0680

Cimabue Fanzine, #7

Cimabue is a really good ska zine out of Maryland. This issue of Cimabue features interviews with the Scofflaws, The Robustos, the Decepticonz and Skaliosis. Along with interviews there are album and show reviews to wet your ska whistle. I like this zine a lot, it's easy to read and informative, and they ask good questions in their interviews. Check it out. (JK)

Cimabue Fanzine, 6 Kings Crossings apt. D
Cockeysville, MD 21030

The Courtney Love Crash and Burn Digest, #1

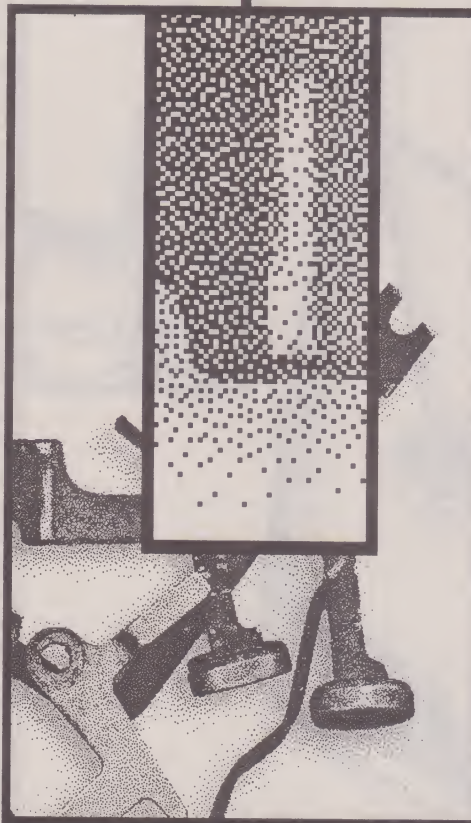
Did Courtney Kill Curt? Did the police ignore evidence? Was there a cover-up? Does anyone really care? I don't know the answers to any of the first three questions, but after reading this zine I can definitely say that I don't really care.

The purpose of this zine is too basically prove that Courtney love killed Curt Cobain. his zine presents "facts" and testimony from a variety of books and sources, and, if I wasn't so jaded an individual, I would probably say that it does a pretty good job of proving love's guilt. Yet, while it is no secret that Courtney Love is a really mean, vindictive, violent fame monger, I find it hard to believe that she killed her husband. This is not because I don't think she is capable of doing something that horrible, but rather that Curt was so fucked up that it seems a lot more plausible that he killed himself. But then again, who knows? If anything, this zine raises some interesting questions, but unless you are really interested in the answers, this is probably not for you. (JK)

Courtney Love Crash & Burn Club, PO box 771 Royal Oak, MI 48068

Cryptic Slaughter #8

Half-sized personal(ity) 'zine with well done band interviews and travel diaries. Thought-provoking is always good, and Cryptic Slaughter tackles



things like dealing with mental illness and the prospect of vegetables being injected with animal cells (what the fuck is next?). Layout was cool and the editor's humor shines through. It doesn't bog you down with information but it still teaches you something. Nice combo. (JS)

\$1 or a good trade; Box 1781, Spokane, WA, 99210

Daydream Faerie #?

Personal thoughts written in a very poetic style, comics, zine reviews, sweet drawings, poetry, funky expressions, quotes, and a love/hate list. Pocket-sized and pretty endearing. This girl knows how to express herself. (PK)

\$1 or trade; Nidhi, 9 Cala Moreya, Laguna Niguel CA, 92677

Doris #10

Another amazing zine heading into the double-digit issue zone. How good is Cindy's writing. The bulk of this issue comprises her poignant travel tales of Siberia. Makes your average rock zine look like the shallowest piece of shit to scrape the toilet bowl. Lots of other smaller pieces and excellent drawings to illustrate. Also, a cool letter from Iggy Scam, and a right-on article titled "fake" which I definitely related to. Inspiration. (PK)

\$1.50 in cash/foodstamps/stamps; PO Box 1734, Asheville NC, 28802

Dork Book #4 & 5

Two wonderful, tiny photo zines. Dork Book #4 is filled with color photos of (I'm assuming) the photographer's friends in and around Berkeley, CA. While the photos aren't that great individually, packaging them together like this is really intriguing. It makes you want to learn more about these people, but since there is no text whatsoever, you end up making up histories of your own. Dork Book #5 is similar to #4 except it's all black and white and the photos would appear to be found photos from the 60s and 70s. While not as interesting as #5 for me, simply because there isn't the obvious connection to the photographer, it's still nicely done and a great idea. Bravo! (DS)

James TB 48 Shattuck Sq Suite 149 Berkeley, CA 94704

Dream Whip #9

Dream Whip is one of my favorite zines. Its small pages are filled with stories of travel, wonderful because Bill has the ability to make ordinary places sound otherworldly. The stories don't dwell on specifics many times the name of a place isn't even mentioned in favor of vague terms like "the city" or "the south"-something that sets this zine apart from most other travel-oriented zines. Interspersed throughout are endearing little comics and pictures, illustrations of little situations and incidents. Highly recommended. (SM)

P.O. Box 53832, Lubbock, TX 79453 \$1

Eye #1?

Eye's byline reads that it is a news, culture, retro magazine. In my eyes it is a slick magazine that may be out of the realms of this magazine, but its content lends itself to a review any ways. The cover story of Xuxa (and you do know who Xuxa is, even Simpson's made a reference!), and it's a well written piece of work indeed. You also get stories on auto-erotic asphyxiation, Dr. Sues, Masonics, Eugene Chadbourne and more, more, more. Again maybe to mainstream for PP, but it is a good MAGazine. (EA)

\$3.95 301 S. Elm St. Suite 405 Greensboro NC 27401

Flowers From The Rain

I really don't think I can be objective with Robert's writings anymore, and I wish I didn't have to be the one to give an unbiased review to Flowers From The Rain. Another wonderful publication, this time a compilation of some of the best writings from the first 12 issues of The Rain That Fell Last Night Made Me Want To Fall In Love With You, a longtime Santa Rosa 'zine Robert has worked on from homelessness to fatherhood. A broad spectrum of experiences, activism, despair and hope. I wish I could offer some criticism but I love everything about this grand yet humble effort. (JS)

\$4; Robert Sutter III, Box 315, Arcata, CA, 95518

Fracture #2

Very typical MRR-style punk/HC 'zine. Columns, interviews, reviews, even classifieds - the usual format all of us are sick to death of. However, Fracture is free in the UK, has a decent layout (except for the columns which had an annoyingly dark background), and is full of stark photos that engaged these tired eyes. If I was a local scenester I'd pick this up every month and appreciate the shit out of it. Just not sure I'd send away for it is all... (JS)

\$2; Box 623, Cardiff, CF3 9ZA, Wales, UK

Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated #2

I'm kinda surprised that they sent this to punk planet, considering that it has nothing to do with punk, and is more a professional magazine than a zine. But who cares? It's got a Mobieus comic in it!!! For those of you who don't know who Mobieus is, I will just say that he is probably one of the greatest comic book artists of our time, and is also a major contributor to American cinema and design. He has done set and costume design for classic films such as Blade Runner, Dune, and the Fifth Element, as well as countless others. His contribution to this magazine is short, but worth the price of the magazine in itself. Other than the Mobieus story and the Frank Frazetta cover, the rest of this magazine is pretty much complete Image comics style crap. But hey, its got Mobieus!! (JK)

Free Stuffing Tool Inside #2

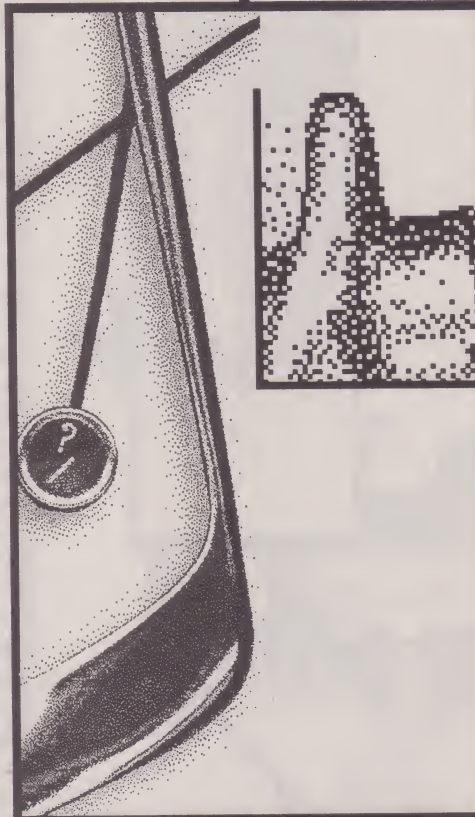
A scribble-scrabble zine of the story-type. I liked the drawings, but hated the fact that one of the contributors went to a Reel Big Fish show. They suck, and for that reason alone you must stop this zine now! Turn in your punk badges now! (BC)

50 cents 6322 Sovereign dr. #110 San Antonio, TX. 78229

Great God Pan, #11

I really like this a lot. Great God Pan bills itself as "The Champion of California" a massive collection and reflection on what it means to be a Californian. I am not a Californian, this didn't really apply to me directly, but after reading for a while you can really begin to feel the spirit of California ooze from the pages. I know that sounds cheesy, but it is true. Great God Pan is mostly a collection of stories, fiction, artwork, poetry, interesting facts about weird places in California, and epic tales of the rise and falls of such celebrities as Uri Geller and Jim Webb, along with reviews, and a great story about the band Monitor. Like many other zines I have reviewed this month, this baby is huge, and I haven't yet been able to read the whole thing. It seems like every time I open this thing I find something new and cool that I haven't seen yet. Sort of like California, which is a huge state, and one in which you could live your whole life without seeing it all. A very nice layout and design make reading this a good experience and the writing is fantastic. I really can't say enough good things about this magazine, so just go check it out for yourself. (JK)

Great God Pan Magazine, PO box 491 Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 \$4.00



Greedy Pigs #4

A fairly mediocre cut-and-paste music zine. Interviews with Set Against, Jon Doe, Bus Station Loonies, reviews, columns and (ugh) poetry. (SM)
19 Brindley Rd., Rugby, Warks, CV214BJ, UK \$2 ppd.

Gumshoe #1

It's good to see that there are still people using a newspaper-like format in punk rock because if used wisely, a large amount of information can be printed without a large amount of wasted space. Anyhow, it may seem as if Gumshoe is another ridiculous pop punk publication but inside is filled with some well written articles on a KKK march in Pittsburgh, starting a new life, and sexism in the military. As for music related items, there is a short interview with Gameface and another with Dead Beat Records, reviews and a handful of ads. Regardless of the thin product, Gumshoe ended up being a worthy endeavor for me. (BR)
\$.50; 5500 Prytania St. Box #133, New Orleans, LA 70115

Hell or CLEVELAND

This is a thick booklet of poems by the writer's writer Eric Evans. Even though there are some cool short ones about thinking, and Asian girls....they still are poems. And poems suck! hahaha (BC)
Eric Evans 343 Rock Beach rd. Rochester, NY. 14617

Highest Population of Rock Stars, #10

Wow, this is real good. Truly thick with good writing, Highest Population of Rock stars is what a good personal zine should be, personal. The writing in this zine is great, and is sometimes really touching in a sad melancholy kind of way. The story about going for an AIDS test is great, as well as the section of letters she wrote to various people. This zine reads a lot like a diary and is very personal. The short comic on the inside is great, and it reminds me a lot of Adrian Tomine, whose work I can tell has influenced this zine a lot. Nice. (JK)
HPRS. 1357 Sullivan Rd. Alden, NY 14004 \$2.00

Highway #666

Vomit only prints four record reviews and then comments that "everybody seemed to stop sending me records." News flash: Your 'zine sucks and no one in their right mind would EVER send you ANYTHING to review, ok? This has stupid and juvenile interviews about dick sizes, scratchy drunken ramblings that make no sense, and a very confusing layout. Decent interview with Hellbender wasn't even close to saving the day. Vomit, spend your time more wisely. Get sober and get a life. (JS)
\$1; Box 194, New Hill, NC, 27562

Hit it or Quit it Summer 98

Funny, I thought that this cover looked a lot like a Punk Planet cover and lo and behold it was done by Josh and the Collection "you can spot em' a mile away" Agency. This issue is worth the Steve Albini episode all together (any fan of Steve or Shellac should read this!). A great Groupie article that sets HIOQI above most zines of this nature. You also get reviews, columns (good quality!) and the usual ads and stuff. ORDER THIS NOW. (EA)
\$2 PO Box 14624 Chicago, IL 60614

Hobby Broadcasting #2

This neat-o mag deals with a very punk thing called broadcasting. The AM/FM pirate radio filling up the airwaves with good stuff is an American tool that we need to keep polished and ready to use. This D.I.Y. magazine will introduce you into that world. And they have music reviews. (BC)
\$3.50 P.O. Box 642 Mont Alto, PA. 17237

Hodgepodge #4

This is unreal! If you had seen Hodgepodge #1 you would know why my jaw is currently unhinged. The improvement is right off the map, and I can't help but wonder how good this mag can get in future issues. Mike Schade talks about burning out in his editorial and will continue from now on at his own pace. Reflection will help this 'zine some, but Mike also has to know what a quality job he has done on this issue and keep the momentum going. Columns that will tear your heart out (the twin brothers' experiences with identical aneurysms immediately comes to mind), in-depth interviews with interesting subjects like Martin from Los Crudos, Jason Farrell, and Alex Dunham to name three, and well researched political articles. Design is top notch and the newsprint is that hi-gloss quality that almost makes you forget you're reading newsprint. I'm so fucking blown away right now, I just dug up Hodgepodge #1 and I can't even fathom the difference. People have such potential for learning and progressing. It floors me! (JS)
\$2; Michael Schade, 983 Little Neck Ave., N. Bellmore, NY, 11710

I Stand Alone #10

It is hard to believe how strong this zine has been going since the time that I Stand Alone #1 made it's way to my old townhouse. Layout-wise, this issue has improved leap and bounds since Adele's early days of photocopying at Kinko's. As far as the content is concerned, I have mixed feelings. Generally speaking, there are in depth interviews with John McKaig, Despair, Trustkill Records, Harvest, a Comin Correct tour diary as well as columns, reviews, etc. The editor's still standing enthusiasm for the straightedge lifestyle is inspiring but their infatuation with some of less tasteful elements of that scene kind of bother me. Also, I don't think I like the idea of X'd up kids in Marilyn Manson shirts stage diving to Pantera either. Enough nit-picking though, I Stand Alone is worthy of your support. (BR)
\$2; P.O. Box 321, Buckner, KY 40010

Idiot #3

Alex calls this the "I rain out of crap to write about so I had other people do my job for me" issue. Lots of columns from friends laid out in a simple reading style - big fonts, spacious layout. I enjoyed reading Idiot. It was easy on the eyes and easy on the brain. I disagreed with a lot of the opinions expressed but it made me think and question things... Not bad at all. (JS)
\$1; 733 Coolidge St. Apt. 206, Honolulu, HI, 96826

Impact Press #15

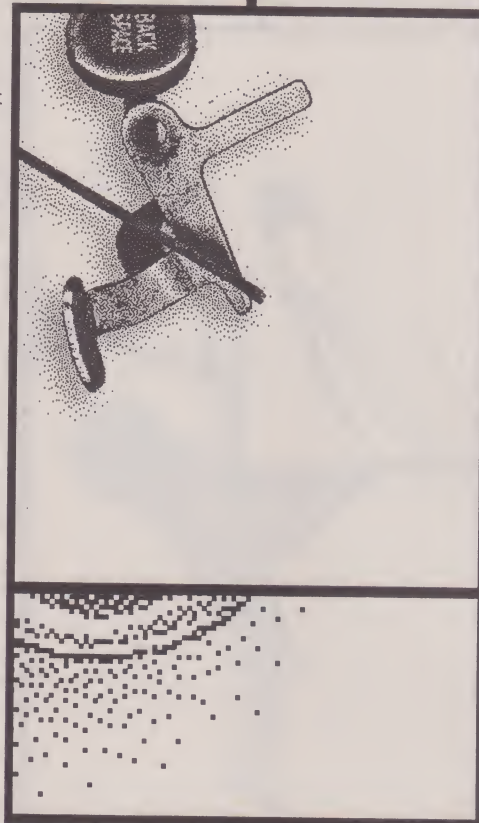
Zine with columns, articles ("cybercommunity" being the biggest one and a first-person telling of being a phone psychic being the most interesting), reviews and more. Not a lot of personality here folks. (DS)
\$1; 10151 University Blvd. Suite 151 Orlando, FL 32817

Infinity Plus One, Jan. 98

Thoughts before and after going veggie, anti-apathy, in defense of capitalism, transcending the mundane, Magick, stats and shit on television, Croatan tour diary, Halloween, propaganda, capital punishment, and music reviews. Interesting opinions, decent layout. (PK)
Thomas Davies, RR2 Site 218, C18, Courtenay BC, V9N 5M9 Canada

The Inner Swine Vol. 4 #2

"Hey, look at me, I got distribution with Tower Records! Did you hear me, Tower Records! That's right, Tower Records!" Why anyone would want to brag about being distributed at a huge chain store is beyond me but,



then again, The Inner Swine is hardly a part of the DIY underground scene. This reads more like one of those boring regional literary magazines, except everything is done by one person. He's a decent writer with a bit of an intellectual poser style of using big words and trying to sneak snarky references past his less attentive readers. Like me. I zoned out about halfway through, but remember "reading" a long-winded tale that was like a bad episode of The Twilight Zone. Definitely not a fan. (JS)

\$2; 293 Griffith St. #9, Jersey City, NJ, 07307

Jank #13

A very short (2 pages), personal type gab zine. It comes from the once Mecca now just there place called Berkeley. You can learn about past presidents by reading this. (BC)

free Jank P.O. Box 791 Berkeley, CA. 94701

Jesus Come Back #1

Problem one: you put a Make*Up photo on the cover and then have nothing but a stinkin' "profile" on the back page of your zine about them. It's called false advertising. Problem two: You don't challenge the Promise Ring to a grudge match about the movie Fletch and then come out swinging with questions of such detail as to be virtually unanswerable without a remote in hand ("What kind of car does Fletch hit with his tennis racket at the club?"). I mean lets face it: how well would the authors have done at their own quiz? Problem three: Why bother with a big 'you sold us out' interview with Jimmy Eat World?? Who's Jimmy Eat World? Exactly. Why not find out why Jimmy's Chicken Shack sold 'us' out too? Or why that damn Seven Mary Three continues to be a slave to The Man? What's the point?? All in all, this crashes & burns. (DS)

\$2; 524 Hudson Ave. Milford, OH 45150

Jesus Is Dead So Deal With It #28

Cynical. This is the first word that comes to mind when I read this zine. On the cover is a picture of a guy getting ready to shoot himself in the mouth. However, don't assume that I don't like this zine because I do indeed. The main factor in my being drawn in is that I feel like this is something I might have written at quite a few points in my life. The editor's opinion's on the current state of hardcore punk are frighteningly observant and his taste in music is right on. If you are looking for superb layouts and big band interviews, keep looking. However, if you are looking for something honest, I say give this one a try. (BR)

\$1; P.O. Box 1221, New Paltz, NY 12561

I'm Johnny and I don't Give a Fuck, #3

I have to confess right now that I only read like half of this zine, not because it is bad, but because it is just so freakin thick that I just didn't have time. This is too bad, because this is a really great zine. I'm Johnny and I don't give a fuck follows the twists and turns of the writer, Andy, as he goes through life's twists and turns, and loves and losses. The writing is superb, and the journal entry/diary type format fits the zine well. This thing is like a book, and considering that this is the third issue, that is pretty impressive. I really liked this zine and plan to finish reading it really soon. Oh yeah, and its from Canada!! WOW! Canada!! (JK)

I'm Johnny and I don't give a Fuck, PO box 21533-1850 commercial dr. Vancouver, bc. v5n 4a0 Canada. \$2.00

Kerosene May 1998

It's in French so I can't read it. It does have interviews with June of 44, Kerosene 454, Bluetip, Man or Astroman, and the usual zine stuff. It also comes with a seven inch record, with four unreleased

tracks by France's "Fake Hippie" and the United States "Marshes". Highly recommended if you can 10 read French or 2) like either of these bands. (EA)

Kerosene BP 3701-54097 Nancy Cedex France

Liar's Diary #19

Liar's Diary is a great story about an 18 year old inheriting a house from his Jewish uncle (not really related but...) and finding a love next door (w/born against patch and all). I don't want to ruin the story but it was good, well written and funny, erotic, and reflective all at once. He also pinned a few record reviews and a Monorchid interview at the end. It would have stood better without the last two pieces and have been a little longer on the love story. A refreshing breath of zine-air. (EA)

\$1 Liar's Diary PO Box 606, Newport, RI 02840

A Little Hint Of Love

Someone has a little too much time on their hands. A courier envelope decorated up with a silkscreen and duct tape and filled with mini-zines, ads, photos, flyers, and other junk. Contents of note: Scenery #5.5, Haili #1.5, Fall Apart #2, and a cool photo of a guy with his shotgun. Can't guarantee your copy will have the same photo. In fact, I fucking doubt it. If you like grab bags and junk, order this and you will be thrilled with all the crap that falls out at your feet. At least they spared us the glitter, I wouldn't want to have to bust out the vacuum cleaner. (JS)

\$2 should cover it; Box 6933, Vero Beach, FL, 32960

Lollipop #43

Great. I was hoping to the powers that control the universe I would get a horrible alternative gone pseudo-punk magazine to review this time around and my prayers have been answered! It seems to me that the editor's of this gem (Ha!) know as little as humanly possible about any fraction of the indie scene yet, know exactly how to kiss everyone's ass. Next, you have unbelievable interviews with the kings of DIY in Civ and metal merchant gone industrial Rob Halford. The rest is jam packed with material that no one with any ounce of taste will attempt to enjoy reading. Send elsewhere next time. (BR)

\$3; P.O. Box 441493, Boston, MA 02144

Lousy! Magazine #7

This is "the condensed version of my life sine last issue"-and some reviews. I didn't have much time to read this, but it seems like a very personal zine. What I read was pretty well-written and interesting. The poor layout makes it hard to read, though. (SM)

P.O. Box 53, Avon Lake, OH 44012-0053 \$1?

Mind Toilet #75

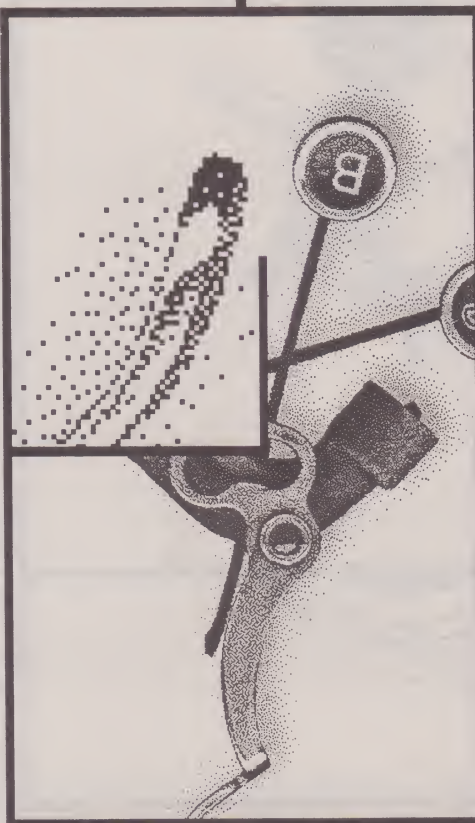
I got the last few issues of this zine, and the only real differences are this issue is on newsprint and I didn't like it as much. It's still packed with content, still sarcastic and witty, and still essentially a ska Fanzine, but this one didn't have as much funny stuff in it. The one really funny (and I mean really) is the column about this couple who got caught pants-less by the girl's dad when there was a dog involved. Yup. (SM)

P.O. Box 6132, L.I.C., NY 11106-2866 \$1?

Mind Toilet, #75

This issue of mind toilet features two really big interviews with Skavovvie and the Epitones and Hepcat, two of the best ska bands around. Along with interviews, mind toilet features album reviews, rants and other news and shit about the NYC ska scene. If your into good ska music, you will probably like this zine a lot. (JK)

Mind Toilet Magazine, PO box 6132, L.I.C., NY 11106



Monkey on my Dick #1

This is quite possibly the worst bunch of stapled together pages I've ever laid eyes on. Half the pages are either duplicated or upside down, it's messy to the point of being illegible, and all they seem to talk about is some stupid band called Sonic Enema. Let's all hope really hard that there isn't an issue #2. (SM)

2730 Polk St., Lenzburg, IL 62255 postage or trade

Monozine #4

Monozine teaches a clinic in how to put together a good zine: come up with a topic people can relate to and then ask people to write about it. Monozine is all about illness. It's brilliant! We get stories of vomiting, diarrhea, giant mouth lesions, rashes, acne, chlamydia and more. It's gross, it's disgusting, it's real life here folks. Love to live it. (DS)

\$2; PO Box 598 Reisterstown, MD 21136

Monozine #5

I have to say that the concept of sending in your injury stories is pretty cool. In this issue you can read all about a lab tech getting herpes, a story of pooping out gum, and another of pooping out a foot tape worm. This is interesting stuff to read, but not on a full tummy. I just got hurt and cut last month and say my own bones on my hand. And I didn't even cry!!!! (BC)

\$3.00 Monozine P.O. Box 598 Reisterstown, MD. 21136

Mool, #4

Mool is a nice little zine composed mostly of short works of fiction by various writers and some zine and show reviews. The Fiction is pretty good, some of the stories are better than others, but overall, I'd say that the writing is well done. The first story about working at a movie theater and tormenting the managers by writing stuff like "Gonad Pouch" and "rectal plasma nugget" on the floors and ceilings was pretty funny. But then again, I also found the story about the guy who plans to go into his office and kill everyone pretty funny, but I don't think it was supposed to be. Maybe I'm just a sicko. Oh well. Pretty cool zine. (JK)

Mool! 1085 Comm. Ave. #313 Boston, MA 02215

Muddle #13

Nice to hear that Muddle will become a more regular zine, so expect bigger, better and more frequent issues of Muddle in the future. This issue is so jam packed that it is hard to not just make this review as simple as "BUY THIS". First I will get to the small stuff: Columns and such, interviews ranging from AK Press to Atom and his package to Phantom Surfers, comics, reviews, and social commentary. You ask, "How could you get more into a zine, then all that?" Well, the kicker here is a very well written and humorous, informative guide to independent record labels.

It seems as if the editors, visited and sent out questionnaires to dozens and dozens of small and big independent labels and decided to write about each one. The result is a great article that any zinester should read. As a bonus you also get a two-sided flexi w/ Tugboat Annie and The Wicked Farleys. (EA)

\$2 PO Box 621 Ithaca, NY 14851

Mystery Meat #4

It's one of those formula punk rock zines. Music reviews. Live reviews. Interviews (the Vandals, Wet-Nap, Guttermouth and Honeybucket.) Dull columns. It kinda sucks. (SM)

Box 118 2680 Quadra St., Victoria, BC, Canada V8T 4E4 \$2

The New Excrement #4

Sometimes content can far outweigh the layout when it is done well. This reigns partially true for this little zine. This is basically of the socio-political genre with scattered articles on stealing from work and a history of capitalism. It seems to me that a lot of the space was wasted with reprinted art

from AK Press rather than conveying one's own feelings on said subject matter. There isn't much to read but this little amount contained therein is decent. (BR)

1 stamp; Box 127, Craven Sask, S0G 0W0 Canada

Noises from the Garage #7

This is the best low-production (unlike Kicks or Ugly Things) zine to speak to me, the garage consumer. With interviews of the Dirtys, Arf Arf records, Link Wray (which is outstanding, the interview that is), ? and the Mysterians, and more. I can't wait for this to get bigger, cause the ads and reviews take up too much of this zine, leaving only a few of Brain's choice interviews. (EA)

\$2 Brian Marshall 8811 Rue Riviera, Apt. 3A Indianapolis, IN 46226

People Can't Drive #3

Admittedly, I am drawn to zines that have either intelligent political commentary or well written music related items. People Can't Drive seems to be focused on more of a fictional agenda and while it seems as though the stories were well written, there was nothing that sparked any interest in me. For those interested in short stories and the like, give this one a second thought. (BR)

\$2; 1004 Rose Ave., Des Moines, IA 50315-3000



PTBH! #4

Travel diary 'zines are probably my favorite. I always get floored hearing about people's experience on the road. Travelling nowhere near as much as I'd like to myself, reading about other folks' trips helps alleviate the cabin fever I tend to suffer from on a much too regular basis. Rex's writings are interesting, intelligent and funny. He seems to be a very likeable guy and has challenging enough perspectives on political issues to keep your mind whirling and churning. This issue is part one of a journey from Anchorage across the US and back up to Alaska. He gets as far as Mississippi this time. I'm looking forward to reading about the rest of his journey. (JS)

\$1; Box 1868, Anchorage, AK, 99509-1868

Rock Paper Scissors

Nice little art zine filled with photographs, drawings, collages and more. I wish the xerox quality was a little better, as everything ends up being really high-contrast and a bit cloudy, but overall a nice refreshing change from text-heavy zines. (DS)

\$1; PO Box 464 Northampton, MA 01060

RTR #7

All scenes need a zine like RTR-one that covers local bands, shows and releases, and also

keeps an eye on other stuff. The unfortunate thing about RTR is the scene it covers is one I've never thought much of Erie, PA. But Debbie does a good job with what she's got, taking a journalistic approach to a lot of what she does in the zine. This issue has interviews with Erie hardcore bands Disciple and Digression and also Sensefield and Marky Ramone, there are columns, a touching story about a kid killed by a drunk driver, scene news and reviews. Worth picking up. (SM)

3306 Buffalo Rd., Erie, PA 16510 \$1?

Rumpshaker, #4

With a name like "Rumpshaker" who can go wrong? This is a really, really spiffy hardcore zine, that really captures the spirit and message of hardcore without ever becoming too preachy in it's approach. This thing is just so packed with interviews, political articles, reviews and other stuff that its hard to mention it all. Some of the highlights include: an inspirational interview with Howard Lymann, an ex-cattle rancher turned vegan activist, a hardcore Choose Your Own Adventure

Book, interviews with hardcore musicians mothers, and an interview with hardcore punk and professional baseball player Scott Radinsky. That is just some of the stuff that is in here. The layout and design are well done and very professional, and all of the writing is great, and in many cases, very inspiring. This is really the best hardcore zine I have read. Give it a try, you won't be disappointed. (JK)

Rumpshaker, 72-38 65th Place Glendale, NY 11385

Scumbag Tulip #5

The only reason I'm not going to give this a bad review is because it's free. This thin zine has letters, scene news, a couple non-groundbreaking rants, and that's about it. (SM)

Gannon Gilmore, 37 Kuhinia St., Wailuka, HI 96793 free (postage)

Shakeface #1

A good start for this little zine. It has some legible handwriting, some good art, reviews, how to make a cardboard wallet, guide to band web pages and interviews with Unsane and Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Poster Children. It also has a silly but sincere thing about being straightedge that quotes that Minor Threat song that started it all. Promising. (SM)

15 W. McMillan Ave. #2, Cincinnati, OH 45219 \$1

Skyscraper #1

Now I know what Hooten was on about a couple of issues back when he talked about small type and wanting to trash a 'zine for it. I had a very tough time getting through this 'zine and for one reason alone - the fonts were too fucking small! A good way to ruin your first issue folks... Lengthy interviews with Sonny from GSL/Bottleneck/ex-VSS, Still Life, Scott Beiben from Bloodlink Records and more. Lots of reviews and some mediocre columns. Find a design artist, or even a typographer, and start from the beginning. (JS)

\$1; Peter Bottomley, Box 4432, Boulder, CO, 80306

Slut #50

Wow, 50 issues. Slut is made up mostly of short stories that are amusing and reveal something about what the author thinks about stuff. There are also a few reviews, instructions on how to sing like Stephen Alkmus, some journal entries and sundry things. There's a lot of reading here, and about half of it is pretty good. (SM)

41 Cornbury CT., Owings Mills, MD 21117 \$1.50

Something For Nothing #40

This issue marks the tenth anniversary issue of a zine that I am; until now, unfamiliar with. This Fanzine is geared towards the more pop(ular) punk and ska scene musically. Despite the cut and paste layout, it's pretty obvious that this zine has been around awhile as it bears a lot of similarities to many bigger zines with reviews and columns abroad. A gallant effort indeed but way out of my interest range. (BR)

free; 516 Third Street NE, Massillon, OH 44646

Spank #24

Finally, a zine with real good interviews from the people I want to know MORE about. Spank delivers some fine reading about Ian MacKaye (and yes you need to read this, cause it is better than any interview I have seen with him), the Peechees, Nashville Pussy and Carbon 14 zine. You also get all the usual reviews and such done in the normal format and all. This is a big thick zine, with a nice cardstock cover and layout that is reader friendly. Well worth the three bones that you need to fly their way. (EA)

\$3 Michelle and Doug Daughtery 1004 Rose Ave. Des Moines, IA 50315-3000

Status Fanzine #320

A thick hardcore-oriented music zine that's well-executed enough to appear professional but remains DIY. Interviews/profiles with Texas is the Reason, Eyelid, The Promise Ring, Jeremy Enigk, the Suicide Machines and Citizen Fish. The interviews are long and ask good questions. There's also a ton of pictures, a big review section and the obligatory ads. A quality zine. (SM)

P.O. Box 1500, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358 \$3

The Story of my Scab, #5

This is great! This has everything a zine should have. Its got the funniest comics about monkeys and Apes, worms, chickens, monsters and all kind of other bizarre manner of thing that I have ever seen. Its got humorous stories and pictures. It has interviews with cool people like Jake Austin and Laura Ballance, and pictures of cool things. It has a nice cut and paste layout and good writing. Creativity oozes from this thing. It is cool!!! Go get this now! (JK)

William McCurtin 171 E 2nd St. #1 New York, NY 10009 \$2.00 and 2 stamps

Suburban Voice #41 plus CD

This is one of the best, if not the best Suburban Voice in the last 5 or 6 years. Going on their 15th anniversary, SV released a CD to come out with this one. Its worth the \$\$\$ alone, write or e-mail for price. The CD has got songs by: Proletariat, Youth Brigade, COC, Jerry's Kids, MDC, FU's, Justice League,

Showcase Showdown, thirty three tracks of new and old, mostly unreleased. Okay, on with this issue though. Besides the usual reviews, letters and columns of any issue this one has a great Rev. Mackin column and a couple of good articles. Particularly, I suggest the Gary Floyd (Dicks) interview and the piece on the incredible (and I suggest it highly as well), Jam box set. As always essential stuff here. (EA)
SV PO Box 2746 Lynn, MA 01903 alellen@shore.net

Super-group The Beatles #1

This is a manuscript by a Russian Professor on the popularity of the Beatles. It discusses how they achieved every musical style by their different songs. And breaks it all down into two zones. It is only 6 pages, so if you like the Beatles, or just wanna read some Russian professor's point of view, then send away today. I am waiting for the article on the importance of the Heavy Metal super-group Gorky Park. (BC)

2 stamps Wadley 11941 NW 27 CT. Plantation, FL 33323

Third Arm Electricity #11

A hilarious half-parody/half-"serious" zine by a cheeky young fellow named Will. Purty dang opinionated but almost always on point. "Letters", "columns", funny anecdotes, Atom and His Package interview, theorizing the Promise Ring's rapmasta past (hehe), Guide to Watching Jerry Springer (more hehe's), indie rekkid reviews, and tons more to smile at on the subway. If you bench

press 300 a day, then stay the Fu away. (PK)

\$1 ppd.; PO Box 41393, Brecksville OH, 44141

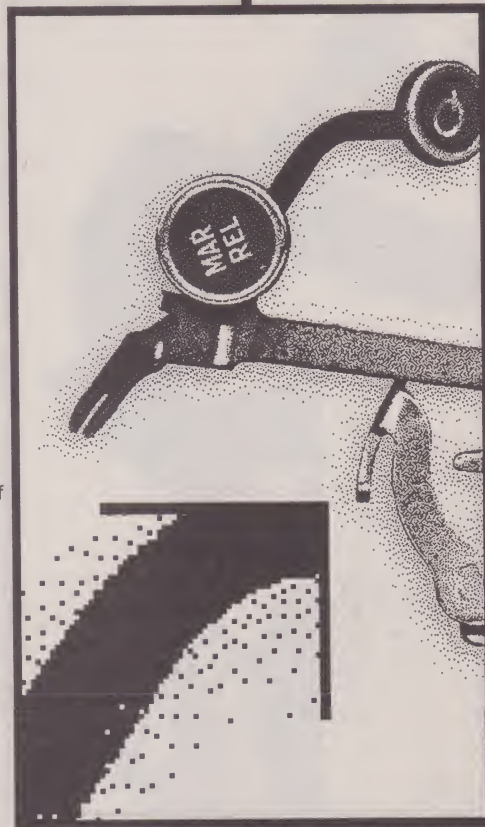
Thirty One #2

I think that this may be the last straightedge Fanzine left in existence besides I Stand Alone. However, Thirty One is all personal writings from a 31 year old African-American male, which made for an interesting read. A lot of the writings deal with the author's obsession with skateboarding (nothing wrong with that.), hardcore and growing up in a mostly white community. He brings up some good points throughout the zine but his opinion on convicting child abusers are somewhat reactionary. I understand his point and respect his sincerity but I can't fully agree with his opinion. (BR)

\$1; P.O. Box 55603; Hayward, CA 94545

Tilt! #9

The ninth effort from the notorious Brob. Most of the zine is comprised of really critical, in-depth interviews with Alians, Los Crudos, Crucial Response



records, DDI, Hiatus, Juggling Jugulars, Mainstrike, a queer activist, (basically, people that have a lot to say) and reviews. There are also features on bands from Belgium, a few columns, and some reprinted articles on propaganda and capitalism. It may not sound like there are very many opinions expressed in this zine but believe me, there are enough to kill an army. For those not familiar with Tilt! or Brob let it be said that he is fanatical about and singularly obsessed with DIY ethics. Every interview and every review reflects this attitude. At any rate, a lot of hard work obviously went into this and the interviews and reviews are really good and well thought out. This is definitely not one of those 'shit, I only have 2 weeks left to finish this' kind of zines and you can tell he took his time with this and really cares about it a lot. He's a really nice guy too. Definitely heads above most other zines. (KB)

no price, I'd guess \$2 ppd., Brob Vanbrabandt, Tennisbaanstraat 85, 9000 Gent, Belgium

The Toilet Papers #2

This zine has a lot of goofy comics that, while the art in many of them is good, their content is either too bizarre to get or pretty much sucks. There's also a Cub interview, tales from behind bars, and tips on how to get out of paying for a check at a restaurant, which is a dirty trick that waitresses usually end up paying for out of their measly tips, assholes. (SM)

P.O. Box 11114, Spring, TX 77391-1114 75 cents

The Ugly American

A great read from Taiwan. Pang puts together a compulsively readable document of life as an expat in Taipei, Taiwan. As with many zines documenting foreign life, this isn't that different from the hundreds of zines coming out of the US (band interviews, personal stories etc..) but the change in location and the cultural idiosyncracies that that brings make it so much more refreshing. I can't wait to see more!

Airmail stamped envelope; Garaghan c/o MTC 162 Hoping East Rd Sec 1 Taipei, Taiwan R.O.C

Urban Legends #1

A great zine of band interviews and what else but Urban Legends. The bands that they chat with are Bangs, and Red Monkey. The legends include a cool one about Phil Collins (I heard it before, but still liked it) and some about Selena, Kurt and Courtney, Ozzy, and a piece about metal names. This is a fun read. (BC)

\$1.00 + 2 stamps Urban L. 3001 Breeze Terrace Austin, Texas 78722

U.S.Trash #4

This group effort zine comes to us from good ole Oklahoma. The boys like to talk politics a lot and get into that philosophy-type end of punk. The do a good ole job gabbin' up the FBI, NASA, war, and a tour diary from Crud. It's free so check it out on me. (BC)

2 stamps: US Trash P.O. Box 5816 Edmund, OK 73083-5816

View Zine #3

This zine just can't make up its mind-calls itself a "hardcore punk graffiti ska zine." What it boils down to is a pretty run of the mill music zine with some pictures of graffiti, columns, reviews, goofy cartoons, stories about Hobbes (of Calvin and ...), and interviews with Earthmover and Jimmy Eat World. Mediocre. (SM)

P.O. Box 530722, Livonia, MI 48153-0722 two stamps

Welfair #2/Eloquence #3

Superfat splitzine (duh) by Huey Welfair and Daniel Eloquence. Chock-full of cool writing and groovy photos. Coherent and simple layout. Tales of travel and punkrock always seem to get likened to one particular big-ass zine out there but fuck that. You could write just as well if you put some effort into it. I found that after I had finished reading this zine, I actually wanted more. Sad to say, but that is impressive. (PK)

\$1 + 2 stamps; Huey Proudhon, PO Box 95516, Seattle WA, 98145

Why Not? #5

A text-based (handwritten but still eligible) personal zine by one Jemuel Joseph Gardner. Random thoughts and opinions which I personally didn't really relate to but I don't think that was the writer's intent anyway. This appears to be more of a collection of cathartic writing, not idiot-friendly, not meant for the masses. Love, childhood memories (best part of the zine), punk suck, feminism?, and some queer art. I'd rather read this over any slick-ass HC zine any day. (PK)

\$1/trade; 39275 Sutter Dr., Fremont CA, 94538

Worst #3

Professional is an understatement. The cover of this magazine would lead one to believe that this is just another zine like Lollipop (Hal) but Worst is firmly planted in the punk rock scene. The zine has all the standard zine fair such as interviews with Reazione, Charge 69, Squad 96, Tension, N.C.A., etc. However, the entire zine is written in French and I can't speak a single word of French so I didn't even get to read Worst. But for you French-speaking types who can't get enough of mohawks, leather jackets and the U.K. Subs, Worst will keep you current on the scene. (BR)

15 F; BP 5195, 57075 Metz, France

Yours Truly #2

This zine is, as some of my friends would say, "as emo as the trees." Actually, it's about half emo and half goofball. There's stuff on heavy metal and poopies and nudist straightedge and they even name Rikki Rocket from Poison "Vegan Stud of the Month." In contrast there's poetry and heartfelt prose and a cheesy but interesting story that starts out about how the writer got into punk rock then evolves into a story about some band that cries a lot. And speaking of some band, there's a write-in interview with Jawbreaker. Overall, a good, enjoyable little zine. (SM)

Peter, 2511 Kings Forest, Kingwood, TX 77339 \$1

Zapruder Headsnap #9

This zine is full of something most zines never have-very good writing. Clever, interesting stories make up this zine. Subjects covered include the inauguration, Mardi Gras, Scientology, and legal prostitution. At \$3, this zine is a little pricey, but with a color cover and pages of good reading, it's worth it. (SM)

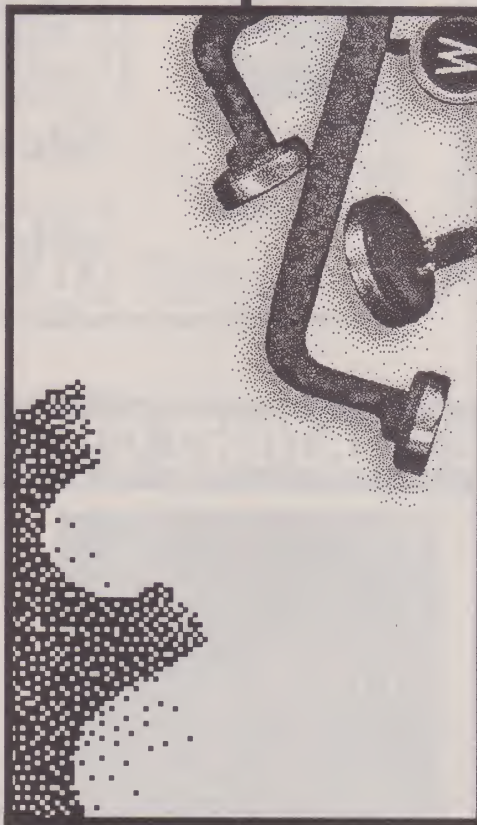
537 Jones St. #2074, San Francisco, CA 94102 \$3

V/A - Chimps #4, Rockpool #1 and Werewolves #3

A three way split with two new issues of your favorites in Chimps and Werewolves and an old reprint or Rockpool. Chimps #4 was not

as good as #1 or #2 which are both great, great issues. It may have to do with the fact of the lack of music and time spent, over previous issues. Still a good long read, it's a lot of words sistah and brotha. You don't get the usual interviews, heavy skating but the thoughts and ideas are still the driving, rambling, incoherent at times (in the good way) motivation of Chimps. Rockpool left me a little flat and was heavy on what seemed to be a cookie cutter zine on girls thoughts. I know this sounds bad, and I am not saying that there isn't sincerity, but it just feels as if I read it all before. Finally, Werewolves #3 also not quite up to the first two issues, but still worth your investment for sure. You should support these writers, cause I for one would miss them if there zines don't stick around. They are filled with, great mixed tape ideas, top-ten or other lists, and words that connect to anyone who has been done the road of life. (EA)

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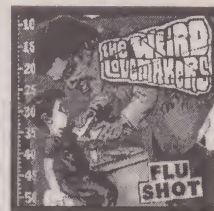
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BOOK REVIEWS

THE RETURN OF THE RED MENACE

BY JOHN BRADY

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO: A MODERN EDITION

KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS
VERSO, 1998

1 50 years have passed since those consummate revolutionaries Marx and Engels first published the *Manifesto* of the Communist Party. The pamphlet, originally commissioned by the League of Communists, is a masterpiece of political writing. In 30 pages of straightforward, no-reformist bullshit prose, Marx and Engels argue for their vision of the bourgeoisie's downfall at the hands of its chief gravedigger—the working class. History is, after all, the history of class struggles.

To mark this milestone in socialist politics, Verso, the cultured radical's publishing house, has recently published a new edition of the *Manifesto*. A slickly packaged hard-back edition, Verso's version features a marvelous introductory essay by Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm and aims to establish the *Manifesto*'s pertinence in contemporary politics. Commemorating the *Manifesto*'s original publication and asserting its contemporary relevance are certainly worthy goals. However, I am not sure that Verso has chosen the best way to achieve them.

...

One of the first things that is striking about this edition is its subtitle: "A Modern Edition." This is a somewhat curious choice. Doesn't it go without saying that the

Manifesto is a modern text? "All that is solid melts into air," Marx and Engels write, "all this is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind." The *Manifesto* is a gold mine of such observations about the modern condition. Indeed there are few other texts which capture so succinctly and so dramatically the stakes in modern capitalist society's rise (and fall?).

No, the editors at Verso missed the boat with their choice of subtitle. They really should have chosen the more accurate "A Stylish Edition." Because if anything, this is a stylish book, one that doesn't skimp on the details that make a book look good. Marx and Engels's words are printed on heavy, pleasant, cream-colored paper. The font is pleasing to the eye; elegant and simple it honors the *Manifesto*'s gravity and importance. Continuing in the same aesthetic vein, the book's jacket features a distinctive, eye-catching motif: a blood-red flag flying against a background of midnight black. Yes, this edition will look good on any bookshelf, whether in an East Village cold water walk-up or in a Bay Area Victorian with high ceilings and hardwood floors. Just don't take it to work, though—you wouldn't want to get it dirty.

One of the strengths of this edition is Hobsbawm's introductory essay. After provid-

ing a brief but fascinating account of the *Manifesto*'s publishing history, Hobsbawm addresses the work's relevance for today's politics. He is extremely judicious and insightful here. He does not shy away from pointing out Marx and Engels's failings and missteps, even as he forcefully demonstrates the continuing power and importance of their views.

For Hobsbawm, one of the primary strengths of the *Manifesto* is its identification of the long term tendencies of capitalist development, including its vision of a "massively globalized capitalism." What is more, the *Manifesto* succeeds in focusing our attention on the contradictions built into a market based system and this system's tendency towards crisis. Finally, Hobsbawm rightly emphasizes the *Manifesto*'s commitment to the centrality of politics in the struggle for social change, arguing persuasively that "even before Lenin, Marxian theory was not just about 'what history will show will happen,' but also about 'what must be done.'"

Hobsbawm is right on all of these points. Yet I think that his essay and Verso's re-publishing of the *Manifesto* beg the real question: Do we really need a new edition? The answer, I would argue, is no. It's not as if this new edition will suddenly make the *Manifesto* widely available after years of scarcity. The *Manifesto* is easy to find at any used book store and usually for a price that is a damn sight cheaper than the 13 bills you'll have to plunk down for the Verso model. What's more, it's not as if the

ideas and themes of the text are unfamiliar. I would argue that of all of Marx and Engels's works, the *Manifesto* commands the most public recognition, even if it sadly no longer commands wide public allegiance. And finally, the *Manifesto* isn't the best thing that Marx and Engels wrote. Surely, it is a brilliant piece of political polemics and agitation but as a piece of social analysis, it falters. The longer, more detailed works by Marx and Engels like *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *Capital*, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* make up for the *Manifesto*'s deficits. If anything, it is these works that deserve a wider audience.

All of this is not to say that the 150 year anniversary shouldn't be marked. It should, but it should be marked in a different way, one truer to the *Manifesto*'s spirit and the spirit of Marx and Engels's work generally. As Hobsbawm notes, Marx and Engels deeply appreciated the necessity of political struggle in affecting social change. They also, we might add, knew the importance of history for understanding how societies can be changed for the better. Yet they were not content, as they argue in *The Germany Ideology*, to write the history of "princes and States, religious and all sorts of theoretical struggles." Instead they attempted to write the history of the "real process of production" and the "material production of life itself." This is a history, as we know from the *Manifesto*, that involves exploitation and subjugation, but that also holds out the

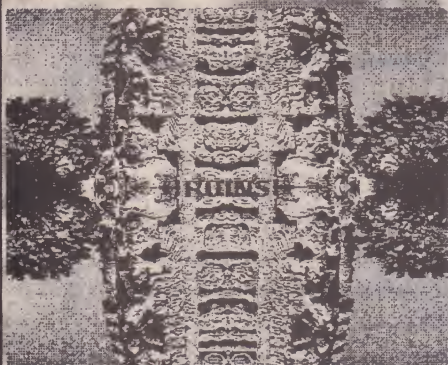
possibility, the hope of a radical rupture with business as usual and the establishment of a more just society.

Given that Marx and Engels were both politicians and historians, what we should have to mark the *Manifesto*'s anniversary are histories—political histories of the how social movements across the globe attempt to fulfill the *Manifesto*'s promise of a better future. In reading such histories and learning how such movements succeed and fail, those of us still interested in these things would have a chance to reflect in a more direct and meaningful way on Marxism's relevance for contemporary politics. We would be in the position to better assess the key question: "What is to be done?"

Verso has missed the chance for such a meaningful commemoration. Instead they have published what amounts to a coffee table book for reds. ☹

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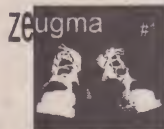
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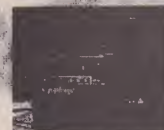
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Video 40min (Globeus/Sonore)
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Artzine-tape (Oranj prod/Sonore) 1st issue around the « shoe » theme. Photos, texts, painting and music from UK, F, CZ, D, USA. \$8 postpaid.



REMUE MENAGE

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Magazine vol.5 (Tototo)
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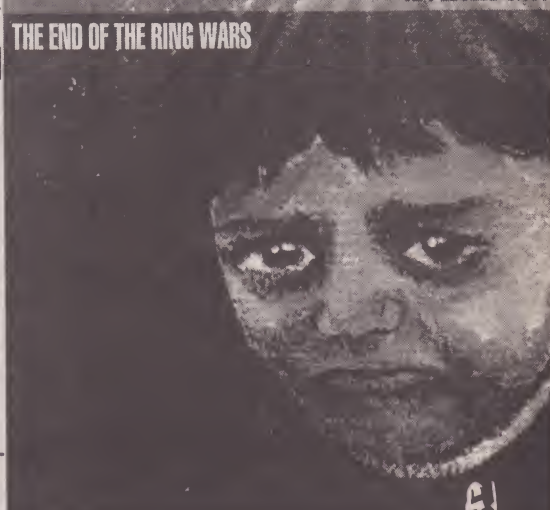
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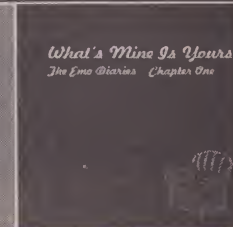
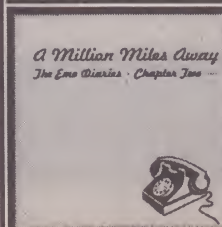
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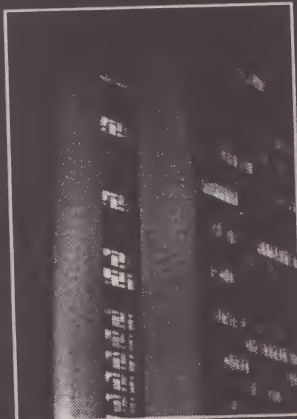
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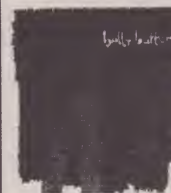


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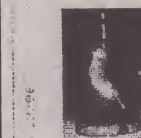
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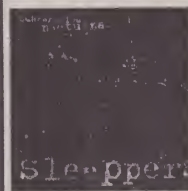
Speedy, refreshing and energetic. From Poitiers and they play hardcore à la Hardons with a very personal touch. "It has a nice feel to it (...) there's a lot of energy" (MRR). "The breaks are great, the music is great, the vocals are great, the harmonies are great, everything is great." (Punkplanet)



TANTRUM

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SLEEPERS

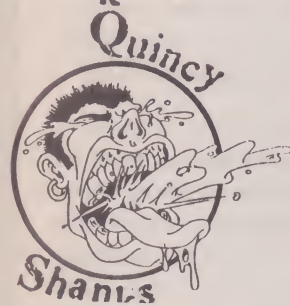
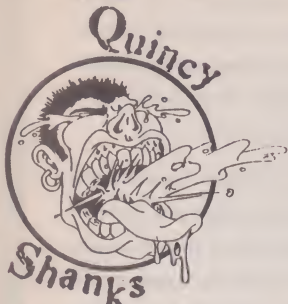
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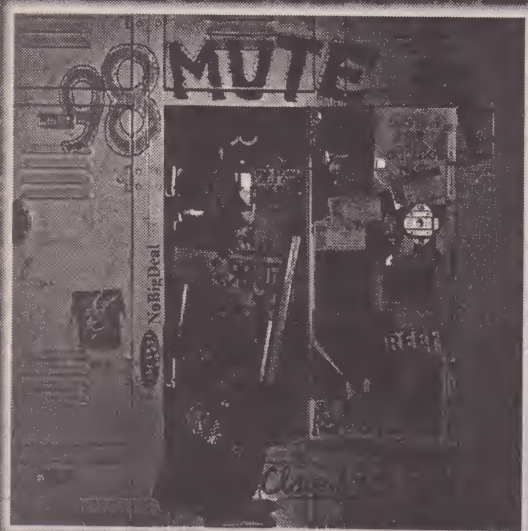
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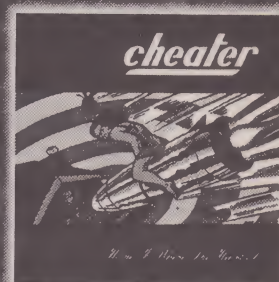
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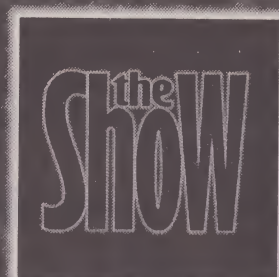
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All issues before PP15 are all black & white. Covers of PP15-21 are 2-3 color. All issues after 21 have full color covers. Confused yet?

PP4 Interviews with Epitaph records, Allied records and a punk living with AIDS. Article the ABC No RIO. 80 pgs.

PP7 Interviews with Man or Astroman, Kerosene 454, & Emigre Magazine's Rudy Vanderlans. Articles on the NEA and Pirate Video. 96 pgs

PP8 Interviews with Red Aunts, Aus Rotten, Fabric, and The Smears. Article on Punk Publishing. 104 pgs.

PP11 Interviews with Texas is the Reason, Naked Aggression, John Cougar Concentration Camp, and Christie Front Drive. Article on Community based money. Part 2 of the how to buy a guitar DIY file. 104 pgs

PP12 Interviews with Cub, Squirtgun, and Aaron Cometbus. Articles on UFOs, Punk Film, and The Telecommunications Act. DIY on how to get ready for a tour. 104 pgs

PP13 Interviews with Adrian Tomine, Lifetime, Jon Moritsugu, and Sinkhole. An incredible article about voting in the US. DIY on how to change car oil. Plus fiction, columns, and everything else you want like you want me! 112 pgs

PP14 Interviews with Re/Search's V. Vale, Delta 72, Promise Ring, The Strike, and Factsheet 5's R. Seth Friedman. Fascinating article about punk & multinational capitalism. DIY on buying a van. Recipes reviews, columns and all that other stuff you love! 120pgs

PP15 This issue features 20 pages of coverage from the 1996 Democratic & Republican conventions. It also has interviews with Sarah Dyer from Action Girl Comics, Rhythm Collision, Chamberlain, and cheese-cake as well as DIY, columns, and all that other stuff you can't get enough of! 120 pgs

PP16 Interviews with Sarah Jacobson, Damnation AD, The Dismemberment Plan, and Pat West of Change Zine. A fantastic article on Culture Jamming, as well as an article about the 1996-97 NBA season (yowza is right). The DIY files is a massive article about distributing your zine. Plus, the PP staff picks the best releases of 1996. Guess what? There's all the other stuff you like about PP in here! 120 pgs

PP17 This issue features "All Punk Cons" the best critique of modern punk ever put to paper; before you go screaming about 'sellouts', make sure you've read the article. Interviews with The Descendents, Dan O'Mahoney, Snapcase, Rye Coalition, and Pain. An article on living with the possibility of breast cancer. DIY on scanning, and of course much much much more. 136 pgs.

PP19 PP19 explores the link between punk rock and heroin with 4 articles dedicated to discussing the drug's appeal to the punk community and the repercussions of that appeal. Interviews with The Softies, Troubleman Unlimited, Dillinger 4, Lookout Records and more. Articles on the battle between Alternative Tentacles and the Philadelphia PD, The Who's Emma Collective, and more. There is so much in this issue we can't even list it all. 168 pgs.

PP20 The Oral History of Black Flag. Almost all the members of BF finally speak about being in the band, being out of the band, and all points in between. Also interviews with Citizen Fish, Elliot Smith, Sweetbelly Freakdown, Jejune, Mordam Records, & Lumberjack Distribution. Articles on the McLibel trial, the Southern Baptists' boycott of Disney, and the rebirth of the American labor movement. Tons More. 160 pgs.

PP21 The Make+Up grace the beautiful purple cover of this, our last spot-color cover. Also, interviews with Los Crudos, Tsunami, Karate, Gameface, Joan of Arc & Slowdime Records. Articles on America's undeclared war on kids, author Nicole Panter, the unionization efforts of strippers at the Lusty Lady strip club, and one man's story about escaping from jail. Our longest issue ever!!! 176pgs.

PP22 Our first issue with a full-color cover! Writer Annalee Newitz went undercover as a boy to cover the creepy Christian men's movement, The Promise Keepers. Plus interviews with Ray & Porcell of Shelter/Youth of Today, Punk legend Exene Cervenka, Gern Blandsten Record's Charles Maggio, Ovarian Trolley, & Burning Airlines, as well as author Stewart Home. Pansy Division tour diary. And PP gets into the ring with Incredibly Strange Wrestling. Plus we've crammed everything else you expect in an issue and more! 168 pgs.

PP23 Chumbawamba: Have they been able to successfully subvert the mainstream for their own political agenda or have they—like so many bands before them—succumbed to capital's lies? Also inside are interviews with Gearhead Fanzine's Mike Lovella, Loveitt Records, Subterranean Distribution, The Van Pelt, and The Young Pioneers. Articles on the Pirate Radio movement, one person's experiences going from being a singer in a punk band to being an outreach worker for homeless youth, guerrilla postering and the recent controversies surrounding the Teamsters. Plus there's everything else you like! 154pgs

PP24 The Art & Design issue. From the columns to the interviews to the DIY files, this issue examines the oft-overlooked subject of art & design in the punk world. Featuring tons of interviews with punk artists both well known to the not-so well known, PP24 attempts to paint a picture (no pun intended) of the current state of art and punk by talking to the people doing it. Interviewed in this issue are comic activist Seth Tobokman, designers Art Chantry and House Industries, photographers Cynthia Connolly, Chrissie Piper and Paul Drake and tattoo artist Kim Saigh. Articles about the poster art of Frank Kozik, state subsidizing of the arts, the current state of radical art, and design in the underground. 4 Limited Edition Covers. 164 pgs.

PP25 Girls & Skateboarding. In a special 20 page section, Dan Sinker looks at the growing girl skate underground. Also in this issue are interviews with power violence sweethearts Spazz, the masterminds behind DeSoto Records and the insanity that is the World Inferno Friendship Society. By The Grace of God's Duncan Barlow explains why he's retiring from the hardcore scene. Plus a talk with Outpunk's Matt Wobensmith about why he's stopping his seminal zine & label. PP25 is chockablock with articles too. Spoken word has been a buzzword for a few years now: Punk Planet looks at the politics behind the movement. January marked the 25th anniversary of the Roe Vs. Wade decision that gave women the right to choose; author Annalee Newitz (PP22's Promises Broken) looks at 25 years of choice through the eyes of someone who just had a voluntary tubal ligation: herself. Plus, PP25 looks at the real reasons the Clinton administration wants to go back to Iraq with an exclusive interview with Jon Strange, the guy who raised hell at the CNN-sponsored "town meeting" in Ohio. Also in PP25 are all the columns, reviews, DIY and much much more. 144 pgs

PP26 Steve Albini, the guy everyone either loves to hate or hates to love. Steve sat down with Pansy Division's Luis Illades while recording their new album and talked about everything from working for major labels to playing guitar to the state of punk rock today. Also interviewed in PP26: Avail, Smart Went Crazy, Servotron, Polyvinyl Records, Compound Red and Red Monkey. Any articles? You go it right. Touch & Go Records just suffered a major loss in a court case with the Butthole Surfers over the Butthole's back catalog. Lawyer and Punk Planet columnist Darren Cahr gives us the play by play. The Clinton Administration has repeatedly denied funding to needle exchange programs even in the face of hard research & facts that prove that clean needles in the hands of the people means less HIV infections spread. Charlie Bersch exposes the Administration's ignorance in the face of a growing crisis. Whole Foods has become the dominant player in the natural foods game—Punk Planet gives the whole truth about this less-than-progressive company. Plus, San Francisco lost a graffiti artist this year, Punk Planet writes the story of the tragic death of TIE. The DIY files this issue teaches women simple and natural ways to achieving better vaginal health. Jam Packed at 156 pages.

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